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55th plenary meeting
Friday, 10 November 1995, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral ..... (Portugal)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Agenda item 8 *(continued)*

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work: reports of the General Committee

Third report of the General Committee (A/50/250/Add.2)

The President: This morning, I draw the attention of representatives first to the third report of the General Committee concerning a request by the delegation of the Philippines for the inclusion in the agenda of an additional sub-item under agenda item 95, "Sustainable development and international economic cooperation", and a request by the Secretary-General for the inclusion of an additional sub-item under agenda item 17, "Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments".

In paragraph 1 of the report, the General Committee recommends to the Assembly that the sub-item entitled "Food and sustainable agricultural development" should be included in the agenda of the current session as a sub-item of agenda item 95, "Sustainable development and international economic cooperation".

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to include this additional sub-item in the agenda of the current session?

It was so decided.

The President: The General Committee further decided to recommend to the Assembly that the additional sub-item be allocated to the Second Committee.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to allocate the additional sub-item to the Second Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: The Chairman of the Second Committee will be informed of the decision just taken.

In paragraph 2 of the report, the General Committee recommends to the Assembly that an additional sub-item entitled "Appointment of a member of the Joint Inspection Unit" should be included as a sub-item of agenda item 17, "Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments".

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to include this additional sub-item in the agenda of the current session?

It was so decided.

The President: The General Committee further decided to recommend to the Assembly that the additional sub-item be considered directly in plenary meeting.

95-86600 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a *consolidated corrigendum*.

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May I take it that the General Assembly decides to consider this item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 33

International assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua: aftermath of the war and natural disasters

Report of the Secretary-General (A/50/535)

Draft resolution (A/50/L.18)

The President: I call on the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua, His Excellency Mr. Jose Bernard Pallais, to introduce draft resolution A/50/L.18.

Mr. Pallais (Nicaragua) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: On 17 November 1994 the General Assembly approved without a vote resolution 49/16, "International assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua: aftermath of the war and natural disasters", thereby reiterating the will of the international community to continue supporting Nicaragua's efforts at rehabilitation, reconstruction, stabilization and national development.

We would like to thank the international community, the Support Group for Nicaragua and Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali for their valuable contribution to the democratization process and the economic and social development of our country.

We received with satisfaction document A/50/535, dated 10 October 1995, containing the Secretary-General's report pursuant to resolution 49/16 of the General Assembly on the item before the Assembly. The Secretary-General's report presents, in broad terms, the evolution of the Nicaraguan situation. His comments merit all our attention and commit us, as a Government, to make greater efforts to promote the improvement of the social life of our country in all areas.

In 1990 President Violeta Barrios de Chamorro's Government initiated the country's integral transition from authoritarianism to participatory democracy, from a centralized economy to a market economy, from poverty to development, from confrontation to social *rapprochement*, and from war to peace.

Five years later the country is gathering, with the tensions inherent in this difficult transition, the fruits of the end of armed conflict, of national reconciliation and of macroeconomic stability.

Violence with a political motive has not occurred in any significant way since 1993, according to the fourth report of the Tripartite Commission established by the President of the Republic on 2 October 1992 for the study and analysis of post-war violence in Nicaragua with the participation of the Government, the Catholic Church and the International Support and Verification Commission of the Organization of American States. The report was made public on 12 September last.

The application of preventive measures of economic and social support to demobilized members of the former Nicaraguan resistance and the Nicaraguan Army, in addition to action to maintain civil security, were a decisive influence in the creation of a climate of peace and work in rural areas in our country.

Post-war violence is today a residual phenomenon on the way to extinction. The principal challenge that we face is to sustain the gains made and to promote, as widely and deeply as possible, a spirit of national solidarity that will allow us to successfully tackle extreme poverty and the risk of social breakdown that it generates.

We have actively undertaken to develop educational programmes on human rights; the establishment of a network of human rights promoters shows that civil society has embraced this desire for reconciliation.

The Government of Nicaragua, prompted by the vocation of peace of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), has requested that organization's support for its programme for a culture of peace, based on the universal values of respect for life, liberty, justice, solidarity and tolerance. We are certain that UNESCO's resolute support will be immensely beneficial to Nicaraguan society.

Dialogue and national understanding have become regular choices for the solution of the country's problems in every sphere. The representative and participatory democratic model has been enriched, contributing to overcoming substantial political and social tensions characteristic of the establishment of a state of law and the perfecting of democratic institutions, through

economic and social harmonization and the constant search for a political consensus.

On 4 July 1995, as the culmination of a long period of national debate between the executive and legislative organs of the Government, the political parties and civil society, the reforms approved to the 1987 political Constitution were published through the promulgation of a framework law which for the first time in our history establishes the mechanisms for a real commitment to democratic governability.

Likewise, on 21 February 1995, the first transfer of command of the Nicaraguan Army to a military commander appointed by a civil authority took place — an historic event that confirmed the process of institutionalization and modernization of the armed forces of Nicaragua and their full subordination to a democratic Government.

Furthermore, on 5 July of this year the Conference on Property co-sponsored by the Carter Center and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was held. The complex issue of the problem of property has given rise to passionate public debates and continues to constitute a particular difficulty that requires urgent solution, since it affects very sensitive areas of economic, social and institutional development in Nicaragua.

The processes that have been observed during the past few months point to an equitable solution for all sectors with an interest in the property question. The National Assembly has begun to debate a property bill that, on the basis of a broad consensus, once passed, would constitute a viable solution to this very delicate matter, confirming social reform, correcting abuses and allowing for fair compensation for those affected.

Because of our own special circumstances, and despite the progress made in the transition, Nicaragua has not been able to progress as rapidly as we would wish in all directions. Macroeconomic and social objectives are dependent on ample and sustained financing and external cooperation in the medium and long term.

The country's foreign debt continues to be an excessive burden on any equitable development programme. While measures have been taken to cushion the impact of the measures of structural adjustment that have been applied, it is the most vulnerable sectors of the population – women, children, the elderly and the handicapped — that have borne the brunt of the necessary restrictions. This increases social tensions; on some occasions, it leads to demands by the affected sectors for better services in the areas of education, health care, food and employment.

The renegotiation of Nicaragua's debt has relied on the understanding of the international community, which has undertaken to continue its assistance in the exceptional conditions in which we are still living. Most creditor nations have agreed to substantial reductions in the debt burden. The Government has made considerable progress in negotiations on the commercial debt, which totals $1,700 million. At present, 79 per cent of the debt holders have so far accepted Nicaragua's buy-back offer with the support of the international financial organizations and a group of friendly countries. The Consultative Group for Nicaragua, meeting in Paris in June of this year, confirmed its support for the transition process with promises of contributions for 1995-1997, with the objective of reducing the deficit in the balance of payments over the next three years. However, the country needs to renegotiate the remaining debt with flexible criteria and substantive reductions.

The experience of our integral transition, to which I referred at the beginning of my statement, is an example of the fact that the consolidation of peace after a conflict should be linked to global development efforts.

Natural disasters continue to befall our country. This season's tropical depressions have caused levels of rain that have resulted in flooding in nearly all of the national territory. This has endangered the life of entire communities and has destroyed basic grain crops, such as corn and beans — the basic diet of the majority of the population. It has also caused deterioration of the main means of communication.

To this already critical situation has been added the breakout of an epidemic of a type of hemorrhagic fever that has already taken many human lives and is endangering the health of hundreds of people in the western part of our country and in other central departments.

These circumstances obviously undermine the efforts the country has undertaken to overcome the consequences of the war within a framework of democracy and macroeconomic stabilization. For this reason, Nicaragua continues to need the international community's understanding and support.

We have the satisfaction of knowing that pacification in the country and the economic measures applied over the past few years have put Nicaragua on the road to sustainable development, that there have been more-than-significant gains in building lasting democratic institutions, that the modernization of the State means greater transparency in the management of public matters and better conditions for practising good government, that, with the scarce resources available to us, the population is benefiting in some spheres. This certainly constitutes progress. But we are also certain that the problems and the difficulties, due to their size and complexity, will subsist in the coming years. We cannot think of going back; rather, we must move forward.

The Secretary-General's report points out that

> "the main threat to democratic governance lies not in political conflict, but in the difficulty of the conditions of life and the subsequent loss of faith in democracy and its institutions". *(A/50/535, para 13)*

This potential threat must be overcome by wisdom, political intelligence, a united national effort and international cooperation.

Dedication to productive work that could substantially raise the standard of living of Nicaraguans and achieve the great national objectives is not limited to the term of office of a particular Government. In 1996 general elections will be held, and the country is preparing for a new stage, in which, for the first time, a democratically elected, civilian President will hand over power to another civilian elected in a process as open and honest as that of 1990. The new authorities must continue to promote national development, with the participation of all the sectors, a sense of social justice, reconciliation and adherence to the law and the vision of a better future for all Nicaraguans. With this, we will be successfully completing the first stage of the democratic transition in Nicaragua.

We have already made a request to the Secretary-General that the United Nations observe the 1996 electoral process. We are also calling upon the international community to lend its political and financial support to this process, so that it will end successfully in democracy and peace.

Today, on behalf of the co-sponsors, I wish to present for consideration by Members of the Assembly, draft resolution A/50/L.18, entitled "International assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua: aftermath of the war and natural disasters". This draft resolution is similar in content to resolution 49/16, adopted by the Assembly on 17 November 1994. It has simply been brought up to date in the light of the events and circumstances of our transition. I urge that this draft resolution be adopted unanimously.

In conclusion, allow me to state that Nicaragua gratefully acknowledges the ample and effective response of the United Nations system and of the international community in mobilizing resources necessary to our institutional, economic and social development. That contribution consolidates the advances made in the democratic arena and makes a life of freedom the path to justice and peace for all Nicaraguans.

Mr. Maruyama (Japan) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: For four years now, the General Assembly has taken up the important subject of international assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua. During that time, the Government of Nicaragua has made substantial progress, under extremely difficult circumstances, in the areas of national reconciliation, macroeconomic stabilization, consolidation of democracy and reorganization of civil society.

In the political field, we have witnessed the process of transition strengthened through the demobilization of more than 20,000 members of the Nicaraguan Resistance, which today participates in the national debate as a political party. Each step taken towards the consolidation of civilian control over the military is one more step towards justice and democratic freedom. Nicaragua is, therefore, to be commended for reducing the National Army from 98,000 to 15,700, rendering it today the smallest in Central America. The country now enjoys a level of political freedom and democracy greater than at any moment in its history, an achievement highlighted by the promulgation of the constitutional reforms by President de Chamorro on 4 July this year. It is, therefore, our sincere hope that the elections scheduled to be held in October next year under the newly reformed Constitution will be conducted in a democratic and fair manner. In the economic field, the framework of a market economy having been put in place, the country now enjoys much lower inflation and the highest economic growth rate in 15 years.

It is only through strenuous effort and unshakable determination that the Government and people of Nicaragua have been able to make this progress, and, on behalf of my delegation and the Government of Japan, I

wish to take this opportunity to once again, pledge our continued support.

In accordance with its principles of official development assistance, Japan has substantially increased its assistance to Nicaragua in recent years, with a view to supporting its efforts to achieve democratization and economic reform. That assistance has been directed in particular to improving the balance of payments, meeting basic human needs and promoting human-resources development. Japanese official aid to Nicaragua, including yen loans, grants and technical cooperation, totalled $207.7 million for the period 1990 to 1994.

At the end of last year, a high-level Japanese mission for economic and technical cooperation visited Nicaragua, and as a result of the subsequent agreement Japan now intends to provide Nicaragua with economic and technical assistance, with particular emphasis on activities in such areas as social development, eradicating poverty, improving socio-economic infrastructure, conserving the environment, promoting the democratization process and enhancing economic stability.

Although, as I have already said, the Government of Nicaragua, headed by President Chamorro, has made substantial achievements, it continues to face serious difficulties as it strives for economic recovery, macroeconomic stabilization and improvements in infrastructure and in efforts to eliminate poverty. I believe the Government and the people of Nicaragua need and deserve the continuing assistance of donor countries and the international community as a whole as they pursue the full attainment of those objectives. For its part, the Government of Japan will do its utmost to ensure that Nicaragua is successful in its struggle to achieve a better life for its people.

Mr. Ferrarin (Italy): Italy wishes to express its appreciation for the Secretary-General's report (A/50/535) entitled "International assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua: aftermath of the war and natural disasters".

Since the end of the civil war, the people and the Government of Nicaragua have made great efforts to rebuild civil society and to move the country towards a peaceful life and economic and social prosperity.

The transition process was a challenge for the Government of National Reconciliation: it was necessary to re-establish democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, foster a market economy and eradicate poverty.

We are very pleased to note that Nicaragua has made important achievements in this process. Pacification appears to have been consolidated, and the economic policies for stabilization are producing solid results in the inflation rate and economic growth.

Allow me to mention that Italy has also decided to manifest once again its friendship and solidarity with the Government and the people of Nicaragua, with whom we share strong Latin ties, by granting a unilateral debt reduction in addition to the one agreed to by the Paris Club in March 1995.

My country contributed very actively and significantly to the peace process in Central America and Nicaragua through $115 million in funding for, and the implementation of, the Development Programme for Displaced Persons, Refugees and Returnees (PRODERE). Through PRODERE Italy contributed to the resettlement of 350,000 displaced persons and refugees in Nicaragua. PRODERE completed its activities in June 1995, but the sustainability of the programme, as stressed in the Secretary-General's report, has been assured through its transfer to local development agencies.

Let me recall that the external evaluation mission, led by Nobel laureate Oscar Arias, has proved that PRODERE improved the situation regarding the basic material needs of the affected population and restored civil society's faith in its rights and its role in the decision-making process.

Even since the end of PRODERE's operations, the Italian involvement in Central America has not come to an end. Continuing its assistance in Nicaragua's efforts for development, Italy recently decided to finance and implement, through the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), a project costing $1.8 million to improve local health facilities in Nueva Segovia and Jinotega for women, children and vulnerable sectors of society.

In order to alleviate the population's suffering caused by the drought, last January Italy also approved a food-aid contribution of $1.3 million to Nicaragua.

In conclusion, Italy wishes to take this opportunity to confirm once again its unwavering political support for Nicaragua through bilateral and multilateral channels.

Mr. Albín (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I wish first to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/50/535) entitled "International assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua: aftermath of the war and natural disasters". The report describes the activities carried out by the United Nations system to help the Republic of Nicaragua.

Central America's enormous efforts of recent years have demonstrated the region's indomitable will to leave behind the years of violence and political, economic and social instability. The support of the entire international community has been required in this difficult stage.

Nicaragua has gone through an intensive political process aimed at national reconciliation, pacification, reducing the size of the army and demobilizing the resistance. Recognizing the difficulty and importance of these efforts, we wish to reiterate our will to continue to cooperate with Nicaragua in order to move ahead on the road of peace and economic and social development.

As we have said on various occasions, peace is an integral progress that includes both the absence of war and the eradication of its underlying causes, which arise out of social inequalities and a lack of development.

My delegation notes with great satisfaction the significant progress made in the Nicaraguan peace process. According to the Secretary-General's report this year,

> "for the first time there are no politically motivated armed groups in Nicaragua". (*A/50/535, para. 6*)

Also,

> "More than 20,000 members of the Nicaraguan Resistance have been demobilized and the army has been reduced from 92,000 combatants to 12,500, the smallest in Central America". (*ibid.*)

Despite the relatively positive macroeconomic indicators, as the report mentions, Nicaragua's economic and social situation is still fragile. The growth in gross domestic product in 1994 did not translate into an improvement in per capita income because of population growth of 3.7 per cent, the highest in the American continent. Since 1990, per capita income has declined by some 10 per cent, and the unemployment rate in 1995 is running at 20.2 per cent of the economically active population, with underemployment at 33.7 per cent.

This situation shows that there are still major issues outstanding that deserve resolute and continued support from the international community.

Mexico, despite an adverse financial climate, has kept up its level of development assistance to Nicaragua. To mention just some sectors, my country has provided training and consultancy services for agriculture, health, fuel and power, social development, the environment, fisheries, tourism, transport and communications, and public administration.

With a view to promoting trade with Nicaragua, we are negotiating a free trade treaty, on which work is already at the final stage. We are confident that negotiations will have been concluded, at the latest, by this year end.

We should like to conclude by appealing to the international community, and especially on the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Inter-American Development Bank, to continue efforts aimed at achieving and consolidating Nicaragua's economic and social development. Their support is needed to ensure that political, economic and social institutions are consolidated and that the foundations are laid for sustained economic growth and sustainable development.

We call on the General Assembly once again to give proof of its support for Nicaragua by adopting the draft resolution we have before us, when the time comes, by consensus.

Mr. Yáñez-Barnuevo (Spain) (*interpretation from Spanish*): In considering the item on "International assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua: aftermath of the war and natural disasters", we have to begin by recognizing the major efforts the Nicaraguans have made over the last 12 months to ensure that tolerance, dialogue and peace emerge as victors.

At the same time as peace in Nicaragua was being consolidated, structural reform measures had to be instituted in the economic and social sectors and a start had to be made on the institutional rebuilding of the country. Thus we have a complex process of transition that has to have resolute support from the international community, and the United Nations in particular.

As the Secretary-General says in his report to the Assembly this year (A/50/535), last year saw

> "notable progress in the areas of reconciliation, macroeconomic stabilization, the consolidation of democracy and the organization of civil society". (*A/50/535, para. 5*)

Here we should like to commend the action taken by the President of Nicaragua, Mrs. Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, with support and cooperation from Nicaragua's political and social forces.

At the same time, however, the continuing deterioration in the social situation in Nicaragua could still jeopardize the progress made in other areas. Now that the promotion of economic and social progress is continuing and finishing off the work of building the peace, the international community must continue, through its support for Nicaragua's rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, to provide assistance for overcoming all the aftermath of the armed conflict and fully consolidating the country's stability and development. When the necessary internal conditions exist for the processes of development to bear fruit, international assistance shortens the time needed to extend its effects to the whole population and helps ensure that the objectives of progress are reached while maintaining the greatest possible social cohesion.

Nicaragua has occupied a very special position in Spain's activities abroad over the last few years. Spain has had very close links with Nicaragua in that country's quest for peace, and maintains those links now in building Nicaragua's progress, both through our own, national efforts and within the European Union framework.

Over the past year, the Support Group — Canada, Mexico, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden — continued its work. The Group, in close collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) office in Nicaragua, is attentively following the transition process and is trying to facilitate both consensus-building and the merging of efforts in order to promote Nicaragua's reconstruction and development.

Spain's bilateral cooperation has in addition sought to provide unwavering support to Nicaragua's efforts to achieve progress and prosperity for its people. A large number of programmes established by the Nicaraguan authorities in sectors such as education and training, health, civil administration, urban infrastructure and environmental protection have had funding from Spain. We have also made significant contributions in terms of food aid.

In addition to taking part in the agreements arranged through the Paris Club to achieve a substantial reduction in Nicaragua's foreign debt, Spain has cancelled a large part of Nicaragua's bilateral debt to it, as indicated in the Secretary-General's report.

On 23 October, as the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations was being celebrated, the Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs signed an agreement with the Administrator of UNDP with a view to setting up a Trust Fund, with an initial contribution of $11 million from Spain, to fund programmes that help to strengthen governability in Central America. The fund will also benefit Nicaragua in this crucial phase of its efforts to establish peace and democracy and to promote economic and social development.

For all these reasons Spain urges the Secretary-General and the United Nations system to continue to provide Nicaragua with support and assistance, with a view to consolidating peace and securing the democratic reconstruction and development of the country.

My country was a co-sponsor of the draft resolution submitted under this item at the last session of the General Assembly, and we hope that, following consultations with delegations, the draft resolution contained in document A/50/L.18 will also be adopted by consensus by the General Assembly.

Mr. Henze (Germany) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Germany fully supports the draft resolution on international assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua. For us, this is not merely a text on paper but an expression of a policy that we ourselves have promoted for many years.

Nicaragua has found peace, following years of internal conflict, and is successfully attempting to strengthen democracy and improve its economy. Today, all essential matters are being discussed in Parliament, and debate is translated into action through democratic channels. Democracy and the rule of law have been accepted by the population in an unprecedented manner, notwithstanding a few remaining problems. Obviously, the aftermath of the conflict — which, happily, is over — still weighs heavily on the country, and the situation has been further aggravated by natural disasters.

Nicaragua deserves firm support from the international community for its courageous efforts, which require significant sacrifices from the population.

Germany, as the third-largest bilateral donor country, has the honour of being in the forefront of international cooperation for Nicaragua's development. I recall with pleasure the day when President de Chamorro took office. At that time I had the first talks with the then Foreign Minister on the question of an agreement to provide Nicaragua with the financial means that it urgently needed to set itself on a course of reconstruction.

As a first step, large sums were made available to Nicaragua for emergency measures. Today, extensive bilateral cooperation for development focuses primarily on the consolidation of the structural-adjustment process; rehabilitation of the social infrastructure; and promotion of the private-sector economy, including professional training, agricultural development and the protection of natural resources.

Another issue of importance to us is the advancement of women. Our cooperation is focused increasingly on rural areas. Germany's commitments for official development aid to Nicaragua total to date approximately 800 million Deutsche Marks — or $570 million. New allocations in the amount of approximately $40 million have been made this year.

One of the consequences of the past is the extremely heavy external debt burden, which makes the country's economic revival extremely difficult. In this context, I particularly welcome the fact that the recent German-Nicaraguan negotiations on the rescheduling of the debt have resulted in an overall, flexible solution that remains within the parameters of the solution agreed with international financial institutions. The agreement in question covers debts of more than 1 billion Deutsche Marks — around $820 million — consisting mostly of sums owed to the former German Democratic Republic. The agreement envisages also the liquidation of debts through the application of environmental-protection measures. Consequently, Nicaragua's debt to Germany has been reduced by some 80 per cent — that is, beyond the 77 per cent agreed upon in the international context. We hope that other countries that are creditors of Nicaragua will follow our example.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

I should like to inform members that action on draft resolution A/50/L.18 will be taken at a later date, to be announced.

Agenda item 41

Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies

Report of the Secretary-General (A/50/332 and Corr.1)

Draft resolution (A/50/L.19)

The President: I call on the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua, His Excellency Mr. José Bernard Pallais, to introduce draft resolution A/50/L.19.

Mr. Pallais (Nicaragua) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The First International Conference of New or Restored Democracies was held in Manila in June 1988, and 13 countries participated. The Second Conference was held in the region of Latin America and the Caribbean — in Managua — and 77 States, participants and observers, were present. The Third Conference will be held in Europe in 1996, and we hope that on that occasion there will be even more participants.

The main objective of the First and Second International Conferences of New or Restored Democracies, which took place in the Philippines and in Nicaragua respectively, was not just to reaffirm the extreme importance and effectiveness of representative democracy as a system of government — through a wide examination of the question of governance in new democracies: its successes, its weaknesses, its prospects and challenges within the new international context — but also to create greater awareness in the international community of the complexity of these processes, which require the international community's attention and support, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, to strengthen the maintenance of peace and international security and economic and social development.

In that light, those who participated in the Manila and Managua Conferences took the initiative of requesting the Secretary-General, through the General Assembly, to study the ways and mechanisms in which the United Nations system could support the efforts to promote and consolidate democracies. Without a doubt, the Secretary-General's report and the discussion thereon in the General Assembly will make an important contribution to the Third International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, to be held in Romania in 1996,

at which important issues requiring reflection and action will be taken up once again.

The Secretary-General's report on this item distributed at this session of the General Assembly explains that

> "The United Nations system, in assisting and supporting the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies, does not endorse or promote any specific form of government". *(A/50/332, para. 5)*

The Secretary-General went on to state that

> "By democratization, I mean a process by which an authoritarian society becomes increasingly participatory through such mechanisms as periodic elections to representative bodies, the accountability of public officials, a transparent public administration, an independent judiciary and a free press". *(ibid, para. 6)*

We agree that democracy is not, and cannot be, an end in itself. It must not only resolve a society's fundamental problems but also promote the full development of the whole individual, with a strong emphasis on economic and social development, social justice and the necessary participation of all citizens in building a civil, pluralistic and participatory society.

As is made clear in the report, this objective can be achieved only in steps. The pace at which democratization moves forward inevitably depends on a series of political, economic, social and cultural factors, some of which, in some societies, perhaps do not lend themselves to rapid change. Democracy is a process requiring constant and tireless work, but to date it is the form of government that best meets the requirements of peoples and most adequately facilitates their potential for development. This is a concept that is constantly changing and is in full evolution as a result of the demands of politics and of history.

We are fully aware that the transition to democracy is not easy; Nicaragua is a case in point. This transition requires not only a commitment on the part of political leaders but also, and more important, the unwavering support and cooperation of the people. Democracy demands of itself that it at all times demonstrate that it is the best form of government and that it provides the greatest benefits to all members of society as a whole.

On this point, we are convinced that economic and social development are more likely to flourish in a democracy based on the rule of law than in a dictatorship, in which political and economic decisions cannot be criticized by a parliament, by a free press or by any member of society.

Strengthening democratic structures worldwide is the very essence of the work being carried out through the cooperation of the United Nations system. The pioneering role played in Nicaragua by the United Nations Observer Mission entrusted with verifying the electoral process, and in other countries through various initiatives, is clearly shown in the aforementioned report of the Secretary-General.

The Managua Plan of Action expressed the need to build and to strengthen modalities for international cooperation at the bilateral and multilateral levels that would be adapted to the differing realities of new or restored democracies, in order to strengthen democracy and peace with development. There is without a doubt a fundamental and special relationship between the promotion of democracy, sustainable development and peace.

We believe that democracy must be promoted and achieved on the basis of respect for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and strict observance of commitments undertaken by Governments in various international instruments, in particular in the field of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and in the realization of the right to development, which guarantees the full exercise of democracy.

The task of promoting and consolidating democracy cannot be undertaken by any Government alone. The participation of the civil society of each State is required, as is an international environment of cooperation and peace. Democracy can be achieved only when efforts are made to guarantee political pluralism, freedom of expression, economic consolidation, social development, dialogue, tolerance, reconciliation and full respect for individual and collective freedoms.

As the Secretary-General has pointed in his report, elections are necessary, but not sufficient, to guarantee a lasting democratization process. To meet the challenges posed by democracy and its implementation, the Secretary-General recommends in his report that

"the Secretariat and all agencies increase their cooperation in the area of institution-building and governance, in particular through strengthening capacity-building of democratic institutions". *(ibid., para. 127)*

In supporting this democratization process, different components of the United Nations system should pay particular attention to such key areas as the strengthening of leadership skills and public institutions; support for effective judiciaries that guarantee the rule of law and the protection of fundamental rights; the strengthening of links between government and civil society through non-governmental organizations, the media, local governments and professional associations; and participation in the decentralization process.

On behalf of the new or restored democracies, we reaffirm that the tenets of the Managua Declaration should be reiterated, as the conceptual framework for the support initiatives undertaken by the United Nations system.

In this respect, it must be emphasized that a solid democratic and pluralistic system, based on the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in the covenants and international conventions on human rights, is closely linked to the implementation of policies aimed at promoting sustainable development, improving the standard of living of the lowest-income segments of society, and promoting civil and political freedoms and equality of opportunities.

We need to recall that development — a fundamental right of nations — promotes the full exercise of democracy.

We must not forget that economic-reform and structural- adjustment programmes disconnected from social realities can destabilize democratic-transition processes and fuel political and social tensions. We have focused on the need to promote economic reforms that will ensure a social-security system for the most vulnerable, low-income groups in order to eradicate poverty.

In particular, we would like to suggest that the Secretary-General continue to reflect on this item and that, in the report he will be preparing, he should emphasize, *inter alia*, the following aspects: first, the measures that can be taken to encourage Governments to commit themselves to eradicating poverty, in the knowledge that eliminating poverty means defending democracy because political credibility will be undermined if people's standards of living are not improved; secondly, ways to encourage the drafting of a comprehensive proposal that includes criteria and modalities for international cooperation with new or restored democracies, with particular emphasis on a flexible approach to external debt, mechanisms for promoting investment, concessional flows of resources, and open-trade policies; thirdly, ways of supporting initiatives taken in various United Nations organs and bodies to strengthen democratization processes, peacemaking and economic and social development; and fourthly, ways also to promote the principle of the peaceful settlement of conflicts both among new or restored democracies and with other members of the international community.

We need to emphasize that the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions should promote greater awareness of the real difficulties and obstacles facing new or restored democracies, particularly in the least developed countries, and of the danger that structural-adjustment programmes that disregard the social impact and the specific characteristics of transition may undermine the consolidation of democratic processes.

The United Nations has vast experience in activities for peace and development. Initiatives in areas such as decolonization, the environment, sustainable development, population, the eradication of disease, disarmament and the development of international law, and in a host of other areas, have made an enormous contribution to strengthening the foundations of a peaceful world.

Once again, we welcome the vision of the Secretary-General, who has included democracy among the five pillars of development and sees it as the major task facing the international community and the greatest challenge for our Organization.

We believe that the United Nations has a role to play alongside countries which, in all sovereignty, have committed themselves to democratic processes. The transition to democracy is part of the new international order, and the United Nations system must respond to the obvious aspirations of peoples and Governments, which are prompting them to contribute to world peace.

At the Conferences in Manila and Managua, we laid the bases for the promotion and consolidation of new or restored democracies. That endeavour will continue at the Bucharest Conference. Over one third of the Member States of our Organization took part in the Manila and

Managua Conferences. Our experience and aspirations deserve serious thought and the implementation of a new United Nations programme designed primarily to strengthen democracy and democratic institutions. This idea can draw on the contributions and experience of the forum of new or restored democracies, the Secretariat and interested States in order to meet this universal challenge for good governance for future generations.

Allow me now to highlight some essential aspects of the draft resolution submitted by Nicaragua on behalf of the co-sponsors. It is contained in document A/50/L.19 and is entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies".

The preamble once again reaffirms the importance of the Managua Declaration and the implementation of the Plan of Action adopted at the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies as Set Out in resolution 49/30. Particular emphasis is placed on the fact that the international community must, as a matter of urgency, pay closer attention to the obstacles facing the new or restored democracies. It is noted that throughout all continents of the world a considerable number of societies have recently initiated bold, profound and daring attempts to achieve their social, political and economic objectives through democratization.

The draft resolution commends the work of the Secretary-General and through him the United Nations system for the activities undertaken at the request of Member States to support the efforts to consolidate democracy. It recognizes that our Organization has an important role to play in providing timely, adequate and mutually reinforcing support to the efforts of Governments to achieve democratization within the context of the realities and limits of their development efforts.

Similarly, the Secretary-General is encouraged to continue to optimize the capacity of the Organization to respond effectively to the requests of Member States for the provision of coordinated cooperation and assistance necessary in this field. The Secretary-General is also requested to submit a report to the General Assembly, at its fifty-first session, on the implementation of the present resolution, including innovative ways and means to enable the Organization to support the efforts of Governments and to respond effectively and in an integrated manner to requests of Member States.

Finally, under the draft resolution the General Assembly would decide to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-first session an item entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies".

Nicaragua, acting as secretariat of the Conference for the time being, and speaking now on behalf of the co-sponsors, trusts that this draft resolution will be adopted unanimously by the General Assembly.

In conclusion, I wish to say that the spirit of the next century can already be felt, and as the next millennium dawns our world continues to face critical global problems which we feel can be alleviated through the implementation of a three-pronged approach which the United Nations of the future will have to take into account. This three-pronged approach is expressed in the implementation of the Agenda for Peace, the Agenda for Development and an agenda for democracy whose links and interdependence are a fundamental element of the new world order we hope to build.

Mr. Mukasa-Ssali (Uganda): My delegation expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report contained in document A/50/332 and Add.1. In particular, my delegation shares the view that democracy is not a model to be copied from certain States, but a goal to be attained by all States and peoples in accordance with different circumstances and peculiarities. What therefore should count, in the final analysis, is that there is peace and security, national unity and a culture of tolerance, freedom of political participation and good governance, and that these are all based on the principles of respect for human rights and dignity.

Numerous plans and programmes have been adopted by individual Governments and the United Nations system with the express intention of providing greater support for a democratic culture world wide. The achievements in this area are today being felt, due particularly to the general distaste for dictatorships and to the desire of Governments to end internal conflicts and lay a solid foundation for peace, stability and development in their countries.

The international community and the United Nations should therefore build on this atmosphere and what has been achieved so far. Foremost, where democratization has begun unfolding, there is need for increased and strengthened support in such vital areas as civic

education, constitution-making and electoral assistance, as well as in the building of democratic institutions and the launching of programmes to promote national unity, especially through the politics of inclusion and a culture of tolerance among the various segments of a given country. In any case, people should be the centre and object of democracy. To this end, any support should involve the people in the conception, implementation and monitoring of democratic processes. Special attention should be paid to the full involvement of women and youth in the evolution of political order.

The areas I have enumerated and related areas are necessary, but not sufficient. A strong institutional framework that addresses such issues as development should be targeted for democracy to take root. Support and assistance should not end at the holding of free and fair elections. Experience shows that weak economies only manage to sustain democracy at a very high cost — often at the cost of development. Moreover, it is acknowledged that without democracy and peace, development is not possible and that, conversely, without development, peace and democracy cannot be durable. Therefore, efforts that entail the enhancement and promotion of socio-economic development are crucial during democratic processes and in their aftermath. In this respect, the United Nations development system should be further strengthened and supported to respond effectively to the needs of development and democratic sustenance. The United Nations itself should be accorded the necessary financial resources to successfully fulfil all its mandated activities in these areas.

The whole question of democratization makes it difficult for the United Nations system alone to support the entire spectrum of programmes in the area. The cooperation of Governments at bilateral and regional levels, as well as the support of financial institutions and non-governmental organizations, will continue to play a significant role. In the continuum of activities, however, coordination is of the essence.

May I add that Uganda joins in sponsoring draft resolution A/50/L.19.

The President: Before calling on the representative of Latvia, I should like to propose that the list of speakers in the debate on this item be closed today at noon.

I hear no objection.

It was so decided.

The President: I therefore request those representatives wishing to participate in the debate to inscribe their names as soon as possible.

Mr. Baumanis (Latvia): The birth, nurturing and growth of democracy is a long and complex process. One of the most fundamental principles which describe a totalitarian regime and communist ideology is "If he is not with us, he is against us". The aggressiveness of this ideology enslaved Latvia for 50 years. Now this is changing, step by step, in order to reflect the required openness and understanding into which all social and governmental structures are integrated.

Just over four years ago independence and democracy were re-established in Latvia. We are proud that our independence was achieved democratically and without bloodshed. We are grateful to the friendly democratic Governments which supported us.

Latvia, through its free and fair election of a pluralist Parliament, has established a sound basis for a democratic political and institutional system. We shall continue our efforts to strengthen political, judicial and legal institutions based on the rule of law and respect for human rights. We are striving to establish well-trained and well-equipped public services and administrations for the efficient and effective implementation of new legislation and regulations. In addition, we are undertaking coherent reform of our legal system in order to set up a stable, legal and institutional framework indispensable for the smooth functioning of a market economy.

The latter — reform of the legal system — is a priority for Latvia. While, traditionally, the existence of the rule of law has been based on the division of power between the legislature, the executive and the judiciary, the independence of the judiciary is a concept that was unknown in the former Soviet Union, where the courts and lawyers were used as repressive instruments of the State. Thus, establishing the independence of the courts, subjecting executive, legislative and administrative acts to the review of the court and ensuring respect for the decisions of the courts is a priority for Latvia.

The necessary process of transition to a market economy is, like any other revolutionary change,

occurring concurrently with other complex developments. Privatization, policies supporting investment, and effective tax structures are mechanisms which will enable us, in the near future, to revive and secure our national economy.

Much remains to be done by the new or restored democracies to secure their democratic systems. Societies expect to find in democracy a solution to all of their problems, including those which would be difficult to solve under any system of government, in particular economic and social problems. If democratic institutions work ineffectively, are associated with corruption or impotence or are unable to resolve problems, a window is opened to authoritarian and totalitarian forces to weaken democracy.

Therefore, democracies must apply their greatest efforts to limiting the shadow side, from which no democracy is immune. It means that all members of society, irrespective of political affiliation, have a responsibility to put the collective interest before their own, to seek effective solutions to economic and social problems.

In this great Hall, in which so many representatives of States that gained their independence quite recently are present, we understand how important sovereignty is to every nation. To secure it we must overcome many obstacles. Clearly, Latvia cannot solve all its problems by itself and depends greatly on the involvement and support of the international community. Meanwhile, of course, no State can expect the international community to solve all of its problems.

We have deep appreciation for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and its office in Riga for their substantial assistance in the further development of the democratic institutions in Latvia. A priority of utmost importance would be to arrange specific financial and advisory support for countries of new or restored democracies, to help pave the road to a stable and socially balanced society.

In our opinion, the security of small States should be a central concern of this Organization, since at this time there does not exist a balance of power or agreement on goals between small States and their larger neighbours. The United Nations must ensure that the world economic environment is conducive to the growth of small States. All States should be able to participate in the formulation of macroeconomic policies.

Now that the cold war is over and the bipolarity of the world has ended, contradictions between the big Powers no longer constitute the main threat to peace and security in the world. The security of small States is gradually coming to the foreground. These States are particularly interested in strengthening the international security institutions and making the most effective use of them. In this context, we consider the opening of existing European and transatlantic security institutions to Central European and Baltic countries to be extremely important.

The building of the new European security architecture, which would help smaller nations, such as Latvia, feel more secure, should include: mutually supportive enlargement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union, close cooperation between partners within the framework of the Partnership for Peace Programme, enhanced dialogue between Russia and NATO, and discussions and consultations in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) on issues not directly dealt with by the European Union and NATO.

For the stability of our continent it is very important for countries to act in compliance with the norms set in OSCE documents, particularly in the Charter of Paris for a New Europe and the Code of Conduct adopted at the OSCE Summit in Budapest, and with existing arms control agreements, especially the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE).

Well-structured, effective, mutually independent and collaborative State institutions, an equitable political system, a harmonized legal system, overall security and economic prosperity all form the basis of a democratic State. By enhancing each of these elements separately, democracy as a whole is strengthened. We are convinced that given peace and time and a friendly, supportive international environment all of these aims will be achieved.

Mr. Ahmed (India): Democracy, in its multifaceted dimensions, has acquired the status of a global norm of governance. While it takes many diverse forms, depending on the specific characteristics of a society and the peculiar circumstances of a State, the essence of a democracy is respect for the will of the people. Consequently, it is only to be expected that, as an Organization whose Charter was drawn up in the name of the peoples of the United Nations, the United Nations system needs to extend unfailing support to the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored

democracies. My delegation is thus happy to be among the sponsors of the draft resolution contained in document A/50/L.19.

As the world's largest functioning democracy, India has an abiding commitment to the principles and practice of democracy. We stand firmly behind United Nations efforts in this area of activity and welcome the Secretary General's report contained in document A/50/332, detailing the contours of United Nations support in a wide spectrum of areas.

My delegation endorses the Secretary General's observation that

> "Democracy is not a model to be copied from certain States, but a goal to be attained by all peoples". *(A/50/332 and Corr. 1, para. 5)*

It is our firm belief that no prescriptive norms can be imposed on a society in the name of democratization. All efforts at strengthening the democratization process in the new or restored democracies should flow from the requests of the Governments of Member States and should be exerted and in the ways agreed to and accepted by the Governments of the States concerned.

As the will of the people is expressed in sovereign independent States through participation in electoral processes, my delegation notes with appreciation that the United Nations has responded to 77 of the 89 requests by Member States for electoral assistance. This process of support for the electoral process, in our view, needs to be encouraged. The United Nations must firmly and strongly discourage attempts by groups adopting violent means to thwart people's participation in electoral processes.

Mr. Kulla (Albania), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Electoral assistance, by its very nature, is of finite duration and should be based on the request of the State concerned. We welcome the observation of the Secretary General that United Nations electoral assistance is ultimately aimed at the creation of its own obsolescence.

While it is true that the breadth of the democratization process encompasses a broad spectrum of activities apart from electoral assistance, and may include institution-building, constitutional reforms and civic education, we would like to recall that General Assembly resolution 47/120 B, which dealt among other matters with post-conflict peace-building, is relevant in this regard. The principles which the General Assembly emphasized as the basis of a United Nations role in that resolution, in our considered view, also need to be adhered to, in the context of support of the United Nations system to the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies.

The United Nations agencies involved in the entire range of processes covered under this omnibus goal should ensure that their activities are carried out in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular the sovereign equality and political independence of States, territorial integrity, and non-intervention in matters that are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State. Further, it need not be reiterated that the request of the concerned Government is a *sine qua non* for a United Nations role.

Not only does the democratic process to be nurtured and consolidated require superstructural assistance from the United Nations system, but it is also essential for democracies to be supported in the achievement of their core economic and social goals. The challenge of democratization cannot be met by Governments alone, especially if assistance for economic development and poverty eradication is placed on the back burner by international agencies.

The long-term and sustained development of democracy as a goal to be assimilated and attained by all societies requires that the nascent and developing democracies fulfil their economic and social programmes. The Governments will, of necessity, play a primary role. However, at a time when global interdependence is an acknowledged fact, the international milieu also has to be responsive to their needs. Better terms of trade, enhanced access to markets, increased and stable investment flows, access to technology on a non-discriminatory basis and availability of increased overseas development assistance are needed to meet their critical requirements. It is therefore essential for the United Nations system also to focus on these issues in the context of its support to the democratization process.

India believes that democracy and transparent and accountable governance and administration in all sectors of society are indispensable foundations for the realization of social development. We acknowledge the interdependent and mutually reinforcing relationship between democracy and development. Democracy ensures that decisions are taken with the fullest participation of

those who will be affected. It ensures not only local self-governance but also participative self-governance.

Before I conclude, I would also like to mention that India has participated actively in the process of establishing, along with other like-minded countries, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance as an intergovernmental organization based in Stockholm. As one of the 14 founder members, India looks forward to participating in all its activities, aimed at promoting and advancing democracy, improving and consolidating electoral processes, strengthening and supporting national capacity to develop the full range of democratic instruments, and promoting transparency and accountability in the context of democratic development.

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of Spain, speaking on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Yáñez-Barnuevo (Spain) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania and Slovakia align themselves with the content of this statement.

During the last two decades, a process of democratization has brought sweeping changes in various regions of the world. Initiated in Southern Europe, in the mid-1970s, that process took hold subsequently in large parts of Asia, Latin America, Africa and Eastern Europe. Fittingly, the First International Conference of New or Restored Democracies took place in Manila in 1988, followed by the Second Conference in Managua in 1994. Bucharest will host the third such conference, reflecting the geography of the democratization that took place during the two decades.

Those conferences have provided an opportunity for a large number of countries to share their experiences and have underlined the genuine character of the quest they have undertaken for certain representative political structures and an increasing role for civil society. Irrespective of the differences in the economic and social development of their respective societies, or their tradition and experience in democratic institution-building, these countries share a common belief that democratization enhances the daily lives of their citizens.

All these countries are focusing on transition from authoritarian structures to more participatory societies; other countries, in addition, are undergoing the transition from State-directed to free market economies. Yet others are in transition from a situation of conflict to a process of national reconciliation. The context may also be different. The emergence of a process of democratization may take place in a context of post-conflict peace-building, or as part of efforts to improve the capacity of Governments for the creation of a suitable environment for the achievement of sustainable development.

Democracy is an essential element in the establishment of that environment. In the first place, it provides the only long-term basis for bringing competing social interests together in a way that minimizes the risks of internal conflicts. In addition, inasmuch as enhancing good governance and management practices is an essential condition for the success of any strategy for development, advancing the cause of political participation has a great impact on all aspects of development efforts. Democracy itself is an important measure for development. Democracy, development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing.

Societies lacking in democracy tend to mirror each other's problems. Often the absence of representative structures indicates the presence of deep social inequalities and the entrenchment of ruling elites, which perpetuates a vicious circle of poor governance and a lack of political accountability to the majority of the citizens. By providing for greater transparency and by establishing mechanisms for participation, democracy makes it more likely that national policies will reflect a broader range of social aspirations. Further, the existence of institutions that considerably reduce the uncertainties of political life strengthens the capacity of Governments to carry out their functions effectively.

Finally, the political empowerment of community structures and grass-roots organizations is a way of ensuring that, on the one hand, the citizenry is not excluded from the decision-making process and thus is less likely to look for violent ways of manifesting grievances, and that, on the other hand, its experiences are factored into, and reflected in, decisions taken in the area of development.

Let us not forget that societies, irrespective of their economic indicators, can be in transition in many other ways. Even in rich societies, people can be unemployed and politically or socially disenfranchised. Economic underdevelopment is not the only cause of the conflicts

that have been gnawing at the conscience of humanity in recent years.

Pluralism is essential to the transition to a democratic government, but in a larger sense — encompassing periodic elections, the accountability of public officials, a transparent public administration, an independent judiciary and a free press. A democratic culture requires a dynamic civil society. Social development must spring from society itself. In the common endeavour for democracy and development, Governments must ensure close cooperation with non-governmental organizations, private enterprises, trade unions and other social groups. Furthermore, the empowerment of women remains a major goal in this regard. As the Secretary-General has rightly pointed out, policies and institutions that suppress the real potential of half of the Earth's population must be reformed. The full empowerment and participation of women, on an equal basis and in all spheres of society, including in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of full equality, development and peace.

The Secretary-General outlines in his report (A/50/332) the ways in which the United Nations system has been assisting States, at their request, in their efforts to promote a democratic culture, provide electoral assistance and assist in the strengthening of institutions.

Some of those efforts are being exerted in the midst of conflict situations or in the context of reconstruction and peace-building. The promotion of democratization and sustainable human development is widely accepted as a prerequisite for countries to resume their progress and rebuild their capacity as soon as possible. Thus, the success of large peace-keeping or peace-building efforts hinges on the existence of a sound foundation for peace. Democratization has been, in one way or another, both the end and the means in the settlement of persistent conflicts in Cambodia, El Salvador, Mozambique or Haiti. Conversely, the lack of a long-term commitment to this objective on the part of national protagonists or the international community can undermine stability and reignite a conflict situation. The so-called oblivion syndrome has posed an ever-present risk to the consolidation of the various peace-making and democratization processes.

Similarly, the idea of the need to integrate and coordinate the efforts of the various agencies and departments in the aftermath of political settlements was borne out originally by experiences in Cambodia, El Salvador or Haiti.

A number of departments in the Secretariat and the specialized agencies are committed to efforts towards democratization, both at Headquarters and in the field. Consequently, one of the major themes running through the report of the Secretary-General is the enhancement of coordination within the United Nations system. At Headquarters, coordination can be adequately strengthened, as indicated by the Secretary-General, through the early involvement of all relevant sectors in the preparation of country-specific programmes by the agencies. In the field, improved inter-agency cooperation requires further strengthening of the Resident Coordinator system of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and additional measures recommended during the triennial policy review of operational activities for development, in order to ensure an efficient division of labour.

UNDP has played a key supportive role, in particular in strengthening institutions and infrastructures as well as in electoral assistance, in close cooperation with the Secretariat's Electoral Assistance Division. Through a variety of arrangements, and at the request of individual recipient countries, UNDP has supported the efforts of Governments to maximize the effectiveness of activities for development.

Also of great importance are the activities undertaken by the Centre for Human Rights in providing, with considerably fewer resources, technical assistance for the reform of legislation, the administration of justice and the strengthening of democratic institutions, including through the training of security forces.

The Electoral Assistance Division has done a commendable job of handling the increasing number of requests from Member States for electoral assistance, which by June this year had risen to a total of 89. With scant resources, it has conducted needs-assessment missions, provided technical assistance and carried out a variety of supporting and coordinating activities related to the observation and verification of electoral processes.

Also noteworthy are the efforts of the World Bank in fields such as the strengthening of infrastructures and civil-service reform, as well as its efforts to improve the accountability, transparency and quality of public-sector management. Other organizations, such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Crime

Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch of the Secretariat, are actively engaged in the creation and strengthening of democratic structures of government and in the enhancement of the rule of law.

Coordination must also be fostered in the relationship between the United Nations system and regional organizations, such as the Organization of American States (OAS), the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), as well as non-governmental organizations. As the Secretary-General points out and advocates, these and other protagonists are natural partners of both Governments and the Organization. This has been made abundantly clear not only as concerns electoral assistance but also and increasingly in other, equally important areas. More than 1,000 non-governmental organizations that enjoy consultative status with the United Nations, and many more without that status, are involved in these activities. Taken together, they can be considered as a network which complements that of the United Nations and whose development should be encouraged with a view to its effective use.

The European Union as a whole and its member States, nationally, are actively supporting activities related to democratization. Under the Treaty on European Union, the consolidation of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are identified as key objectives. Within this framework, the European Union is financing numerous projects in developing countries related to electoral assistance and freedom of expression, the strengthening of civil society and human rights education and training. Assistance in the field of democratization has also been provided to Central and Eastern European countries and the newly independent States. Recently the European Union and its member States have been among the leading supporters of the human rights operations in Rwanda and Burundi.

The Secretary-General has provided us with a thorough, thought-provoking account of what the United Nations system, in coordination with other actors, has been able to do. In sum, we would like to commend the United Nations for its successful efforts in this field. We agree with the Secretary-General on the need to promote sustainable development and democracy throughout the world. To achieve that goal, funds are needed, which means that the deterioration of the United Nations financial position must be reversed. The commitment in this regard must be equal to the challenge facing the Organization. We expect and encourage the Secretary-General to continue his consideration of ways in which the United Nations can rise to the challenge of supporting all the efforts aimed at the promotion of democratization and the consolidation of new or restored democracies.

Mr. Cassar (Malta): Malta associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Spain on behalf of the European Union.

United Nations support for the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies is of special significance as we commemorate the Organization's fiftieth anniversary. This topic takes us to the very heart of that which inspired so many of the authors of the Charter. During the recent Special Commemorative Meeting, our Heads of State and Government reaffirmed their commitment to those fundamental principles which originally animated the Organization and should guide its work in the future. The keystone on which the United Nations rests is the belief

> "in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small".

The past five years have witnessed momentous change, but they have also been fraught with political, social and economic upheavals. In Europe the storming of the Berlin Wall is both a beacon of hope for the future and a reminder of that tragic past when democracy was trampled upon and denied to millions.

The popular will to secure and consolidate democracy has determined a global transition. Authoritarian regimes worldwide have been forced to bow their heads to the will and expectations of peoples. Democratic governance has replaced imposition in places where such a turn of events was inconceivable only a few years ago.

Reflecting on those events as President of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, my Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Guido de Marco, stressed the impact of respect for or denial of human rights and fundamental freedoms on international behaviour; promotion of human rights should be intensified and be given the highest priority. He said

> "The removal of ideological warfare from international relations should usher in an era where

human dignity becomes the fulcrum around which our commitment evolves." *(A/45/PV.1, p. 13)*

The institution of democratic systems is a fragile and painful process. It requires sustenance. It certainly does not deserve complacency. The changed environment has thoroughly affected the work of this Organization. Passivity, which often prevailed when crises threatened or undermined democracy, has been replaced by a reinvigorated United Nations commitment to act in a proactive manner. This qualitative change is having a decisive impact. United Nations assistance in institution-building and election processes has proved crucial in many new and emerging democracies.

Democracy enhances civil society through participation. Competing interests consolidate pluralism. Freedom of the media, independence of the judiciary, rule of law, free and fair periodic elections, accountability and transparency are basic requirements for democratic societies. Equally important in ensuring stability is a social environment which enhances and promotes the dignity which is the inherent and inalienable right of all human beings.

Lack of resources and development are not to be a pretext for Governments to restrict or stifle human rights and fundamental freedoms. But by their very nature, poverty, misery and want trample upon human dignity. This is why the call for solidarity by the developing world should never go unheeded. Need generates tension and carries the potential for strife, with consequences which are unfathomable. The challenges which face the new and emerging democracies are multiple. Pluralism is dependent on the consolidation of tolerance and freedom of opinion. The instances when the aspirations of those who struggled for liberty have been thwarted by acts or waves of political or ethnic intolerance are disquieting.

The heritage of ideologies which ruled through imposition is another, but not the only, threat which the new democracies face. Networks which operate in international drug trafficking, terrorism, illegal arms and the transfer of nuclear materials not only exploit, but often create for themselves enclaves of vulnerability.

The assistance provided by the United Nations must necessarily take into account all these areas. Efforts to develop and promote early-warning mechanisms, preventive diplomacy, peace-keeping and post-conflict peace-building are formidable and deserve praise and support. But they are not the only areas that contribute towards the long-term enhancement and enjoyment of democratic rule. Institution-building and capacity-building assistance which is multiform is comprehensive and long-lasting.

The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) recognized from its inception the inseparable link between security, human rights and economic cooperation. These are the three pillars which helped the Conference survive the throes of the cold war.

Today the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), as successor of the Conference, continues to consolidate its work in all three fields. Undoubtedly, the work of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in granting assistance in the diverse areas relating to the holding and monitoring of elections is of key importance, as are its missions to areas of tension.

Equally incisive on developments in Europe is the sterling work undertaken by the Council of Europe. That bastion of human rights during the cold war is today sharing its experience and expertise with its new and extended membership in an on-going experiment in multinational democracy which is as unique as it is diverse in the areas in which is operates.

One cannot but underline, at this point, the impact which the European Union's resolve to translate words into deeds has had on the consolidation of democracy, not only in Europe but also in other regions. The continued engagement of the Union in the sponsorship of programmes in the fields of social and economic development is as important to the buttressing of democracy as are its aid programmes in education, health and institution-building.

The Maltese people have always been conscious of the need to preserve and protect democracy. We have defended our democratic convictions when endangered. Such principles are worth safeguarding. Today we are reaping the fruit. Our experience bears witness to the benefits of tolerance and freedom as these are reflected in the steady pace of political, social and economic development.

The Managua Declaration and Plan of Action provide a constant guideline in support of Governments for the promotion and consolidation of new or restored democracies. Malta looks forward to the convening of a Third International Conference on New or Restored

Democracies, to take place in 1996 in Bucharest. Doubtless the people of Romania, who liberated themselves from totalitarian rule with so much pain, will have much to contribute to the constructive dialogue on the problems and challenges to the new and emerging democracies.

Democracy guarantees the observance of fundamental human rights. It is built on the recognition of the dignity of each member of society and imposes a social responsibility. Democracy should remain our greatest legacy for future generations.

Mr. Erdös (Hungary) *(interpretation from French)*: I am speaking as a sponsor of draft resolution A/50/L.19 entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies" and also to express Hungary's agreement with the statement by the representative of Spain on behalf of the European Union.

The great political earthquakes which shook the bipolar world have buried it under the debris of totalitarian and authoritarian systems. Today, democracy reigns in a number of countries which, it is true, have different approaches and whose conditions vary considerably. What binds them together, none the less, is a faith in democratic values, and in the pre-eminence and effectiveness of representative democracy as a system of government.

In the United Nations, there is a notable gap in this regard, namely that the word "democracy" does not even appear in the text of the Charter, so that our basic document contains no reference to this concept. This shows how far we have come since the creation of our world Organization.

Now that the euphoria resulting from the major changes is behind us, we now face the unprecedented and singularly difficult challenges of political and economic transformation in countries which have chosen to become, or become once again, democratic. The Managua Declaration adopted at the conclusion of the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies in 1994 refers, quite rightly, to the obstacles facing those countries. It would be a mistake to assume that there is an automatic link between the dawning of an era of democracy and the success of the democratic enterprise. The path leading to the triumph of democracy in practice is fraught with many difficulties and dangerous traps. International conferences on these issues, including the conference to be held in Bucharest, are an opportunity for exchanging both positive and negative experiences on these issues amongst a growing number of countries.

The report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/50/332 focuses essentially on ways and means for the United Nations to provide multifaceted assistance to the efforts of Governments in that sphere. Such assistance should be placed in the very complex everyday context of those countries which are in the process of ridding themselves of a heavy political, social and economic legacy. All the activities that constitute this support from the United Nations — the promotion of a democratic culture, involvement in assisting the electoral process and the creation of democratic institutions — are taking place in the very specific circumstances of the various countries, and they are either facilitated or, made more difficult depending on the particular situation.

The observations and recommendations made in the report shed light on the real dimensions of this task by highlighting the impossibility for the United Nations or for Governments in today's world to face the challenge of democratization alone. We would therefore have thought it desirable to give further emphasis to the importance of regional organizations, given the many partners involved, in efforts to advance the values and ideals of democracy. Regional organizations have a primordial role to play in applying the purposes and principles of the Charter to a specific region, taking into account the region's distinctive conditions.

One cannot forget that the historic changes of a few years ago — those changes which finally, once and for all, sealed the fate of totalitarianism — actually took place along a line of confrontation which kept Europe and the entire world divided into two opposing ideological and military camps for several decades. It was the collapse of that physical and psychological separating wall that was the decisive and determining moment in that process of change.

In retrospect we must recognize the historic merits of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), which in its time provoked processes within the closed societies in the eastern part of the old continent which contributed greatly to the disappearance of the totalitarian systems and to the colossal changes enacted in those societies. Anyone who is at all familiar with the recent history of that part of Europe will recall the impact which the Helsinki Final Act of 1975 had on the human rights and democratic rights situation and the rule of law in the States of Eastern Europe.

Movements and individuals who dedicated themselves to the struggle for democracy, human rights and basic freedoms drew inspiration from the documents of CSCE which, in turn, gave legitimacy to intergovernmental public debate on human rights problems and humanitarian issues and thereby gave encouragement and protection to those organizations, groups of individuals and citizens.

Today, the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, which has become the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) — a regional arrangement in the sense of Chapter VIII of the Charter — brings together 54 countries, stretching from Kamtchatka to Alaska, which have subscribed to the documents of the Organization and which thereby proclaim their commitment to the democratic values that underlie the OSCE's activities.

The OSCE, which has been able to adapt to today's radically different circumstances, nevertheless warns us, in the Declaration adopted at the Summit of Heads of State and Government held in Budapest last December, against taking a simplistic view of what remains to be done. The document emphasizes that the path to stable democracy, an efficient market economy and social justice is a hard one. The document recalls that the spread of freedoms has been accompanied by new conflicts and the revival of old ones, that human rights are still being flouted, that intolerance persists and discrimination against minorities is still practised. The document points out that the plagues of aggressive nationalism, racism, chauvinism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and ethnic tension are still widespread, and that, along with social and economic instability, they are among the main sources of crisis, loss of life and of human misery. This is compounded, according to the document, by the threat of terrorism that haunts our societies. The Summit document reconfirms the determination of the OSCE to combat terrorism and its commitment to enhanced cooperation to eliminate this threat to security, democracy and human rights.

Following this decision taken at the highest level, OSCE has committed itself to broadening its multidimensional activities in conflict situations within the OSCE region. In so doing it is guided by its global concept of security and its indivisibility, a concept which, above and beyond the security aspect, also has economic, social and humanitarian aspects. Respect for democracy and the rule of law represents an essential component of OSCE activities with regard to security and cooperation, and it must remain a primary objective.

For several years there has already existed within the organization an appropriate body through which it can better meet the requirements of our times. The office for democratic institutions and human rights, whose headquarters are in Warsaw, will henceforth have greater resources, pursuant to the decisions of the OSCE Summit, and will continue to help participating States, in particular those in transition.

There are approximately 20 countries in the OSCE region — with, to be sure, very specific situations, ranging from the shores of the Baltic Sea to the mountains of Central Asia — which belong to this category of States in transition. In other words, these are countries which recently have chosen, in different ways, to establish or restore democracy and which are making progress — with varying degrees of success, we must admit — from totalitarianism to democracy. The OSCE missions which are present in a large number of areas of the region are, among other things, actively promoting the rule of law, without which we could not credibly envisage the settlement of conflicts, mostly internal ones, which are causing upheavals in a number of these countries.

In this context, one of the greatest challenges facing the OSCE is its participation in the implementation of a future agreement on the settlement of the crisis in the former Yugoslavia, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Croatia. The specific contribution which the OSCE can make to this broad-based operation, in the light of the experience it has already gained, includes the creation or restoration of democratic institutions, assistance in the return of refugees and displaced persons, verification of respect for human rights, including the rights of minorities, and electoral assistance. This contribution of the OSCE will also include measures to be taken in arms control and disarmament, as well as in the post-conflict process of economic and social recovery.

In conclusion, we believe that the main message of the draft resolution submitted to this Assembly is that the United Nations must continue its action for democratization now under way in a large number of countries in Europe, Asia, Latin America and Africa. This action is absolutely necessary because there is an indissoluble link between the flourishing of democracy, on the one hand, and stability and security in specific countries and in entire regions, on the other. In this regard, we believe that the fundamental relationship that exists between peace, development and democracy should be better highlighted in our world Organization.

Regarding the governmental level, where we will find the major protagonists for the action envisaged by draft resolution A/50/L.19, the United Nations and its regional organizations, as well as other multilateral institutions, must stand ready to support and sustain, in the most appropriate manner, the efforts — not always easily exerted — of Governments to achieve the democratic development of their countries.

Mr. Gorita (Romania): Last year, Romania wholeheartedly welcomed the inclusion in the agenda of the General Assembly of the new item entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies". The attempt to assess this rather new dimension of the work of the United Nations was successful.

Proof of this is not only the unanimous approval of the first resolution ever adopted on such a matter, but also the increasing interest of Member States in this topic. During the general debate of the present session and the Special Commemorative Meeting, numerous delegations offered their views on the importance and impact of their democratization efforts and shared their national experiences. In the same context, the excellent report of the Secretary-General (A/50/332) provides useful conceptual clarifications and sheds more light on the actual achievements of the United Nations system in this field. We are convinced that this is just a beginning and that the Secretary-General, in concert with Member States, non-governmental organizations and other international protagonists, will find new ideas and more avenues to explore.

The representative of Spain delivered a comprehensive statement on behalf of the European Union and Associated States, including Romania. My delegation fully subscribes to the contents of that statement. I would like to add a few comments of particular interest to my Government.

My delegation sincerely believes that the support by our universal Organization of the promotion and consolidation of democracy is useful and timely and deserves special attention — for a number of reasons.

First, the growing trend towards democracy, political pluralism and the rule of law favours a genuine exercise of the sovereignty of peoples, respect and protection of human rights, and the fostering of a social environment aimed at the adequate human development of individuals and nations.

Secondly, the economic and social development of nations can best be achieved by democracy on the basis of participation and consultation of the people in the process of governing. It provides lines of accountability and permanent control over the performance of Governments for the benefit of the whole society.

Thirdly, a powerful and active civil society is essential to maintain a proper democratic government, to correct any tendency towards abuses of power, to promote and ensure pluralism, civil liberties and opportunities for all.

Fourthly, democracy offers the means to permanently seek good governance — one more responsive to the challenges of economic and social developments and to the needs of the governed. Democracy is not utopia, but it has proved itself able to produce tangible results.

Fifthly, sharing democratic values is of crucial importance for the political, economic and social processes in national societies, as well as for international peace and security.

It seems to us that democracy is not a dogma, but an open, dynamic and self-perfectible system. Democracy in itself means profound diversity and variety of expression. When we consider the "geography of democratization", as the European Union put it, we notice how specific the needs and the priorities of each society can be.

At the same time, we are aware that effective democracy should lead to the real development and prosperity of the peoples that democracy is supposed to serve. Likewise, development without democracy is impaired if it benefits only a few of the elites. That is why the assertion that democracy, development and respect for human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing is so valid. Their harmonization naturally implies a positive impact on international peace and security and on our society of nations. In this light, an active and stimulating role of the United Nations once again appears welcome.

With all its merits, consistent progress in democratization cannot be taken for granted. Democracy-making is a painful process which may not be irreversible if it is not backed continuously. Here again, the United Nations, faithful to the sacred spirit of the Charter, is expected to voice its moral support and to

give its concrete assistance. The aim of the draft resolution before us is merely to confirm this need, and we hope it will be approved by consensus.

Finally, since Romania will host the next International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, I would like to assure the Assembly that my Government will do its utmost to make this meeting a politically significant event. In order to achieve this, we shall rely on the support of and ideas from any interested Member States. We believe that the Conference in Bucharest will be, indeed, a new and valuable opportunity for a broad exchange of views on such a topical issue. We are confident that it will add substantial value to the debate in, and action by, the United Nations system.

Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland): My delegation welcomes the opportunity to address this Assembly on the agenda item entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies". This discussion is taking place at a time when peace is an essential commodity in the world. The agenda item urges the United Nations to support efforts by Member States in the quest for restoration and consolidation of democracy. To that end, In doing so, my delegation wishes to appeal to the United Nations to continue instilling a sense of respect for the sovereignty of States, so that there is continued appreciation of the different approaches to democracy.

The Kingdom of Swaziland could not remain untouched by the wind of democratic dispensation which started blowing in the early 1990s. Our approach, however, was determined by the entire Swazi nation, which made its contributions at various grass-root forums. The Swazi nation agreed that it preferred the type of democracy that is homegrown and reflective of its culture and national circumstances. To this end, I am gratified to inform the Assembly that our unique way of democracy has received popular support from the international community, including world capitals, from which financial assistance for our democracy is still pouring in today.

May I, at this juncture, briefly describe how we elect our parliamentary representatives. Our system is divided into primary and secondary stages. From the primary stage, the system affords all the cross-sections of our populace an opportunity to nominate an electoral candidate. This takes place in each and every chiefdom. This procedure is inclusive of all registered voters — as opposed to the party system, whereby the executive decides on behalf of the entire nation on the nomination of candidates. This primary stage is followed by the secondary stage, whereby parliamentary representatives are elected through the direct and secret ballot.

Our unique system is reflective of the key variables and characteristics of democracy, such as election through secret ballot, voters' roll, transparency and accountability to the electorate. In all these efforts, we shall continue to enlist the support of the United Nations and that of developed Member States. I hasten to say that the United Nations has, through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Office in Swaziland, lived up to the letter of this agenda item by providing financial assistance during our last general elections.

Having said all this, my delegation wishes to appeal to the Members of the United Nations to appreciate the manner in which States such as the Kingdom of Swaziland approach the issue of democracy. In doing so, we shall be able to emulate what is good in other States and to incorporate it in our respective political situations. This may, further, make it possible to realize that democracy cannot be imported from certain quarters of the globe, but, rather, is an internal evolutionary process reflective of national experiences and cultures.

We, the developing nations, have been unfortunate for too long. After the end of the Second World War, in 1945, political ideologies were introduced and imposed on us by those countries that found them fit for their national prestige and glory. What subsequently happened to those ideologies should be sending the clear message to us, especially the developing nations, that any democracy founded on foreign principles ends in a fiasco, thus resulting in national crises and confusion.

The Kingdom of Swaziland believes that all democracies, regardless of where they originate, are in pursuit of a very persuasive ideal: democracy. Many wars — national and regional — are waged in the name and defence of democracy. Perhaps I may venture here to illustrate the kind of democracy generally needed by the people: an autochthonous system, the desire to see the system enjoy popular participation, and participation through elected representatives.

The idea of direct participation was first introduced by the Greek city-States. I have no doubt that such a system must have been in the formative stages of participation in matters of government and was a process of development that was to result in the concept of representativity in Greece. However, I wish to emphasize

at this point that other parts of the world took different approaches to democracy, and that the Greeks did not, and could never, punish those nations for innovations of democracy. Instead, they were prepared to learn from these innovations. Even the oldest types of democracy, which have undergone some trials, cannot, in our view, be world models.

Different methods of acquiring parliamentary representation have been adopted by various nations. These have proved to work well if they are reflective of national circumstances, which are the essential building blocks of true democracy. In some cases, there are single-party methods; in others, there is multi-party democracy; in yet others, there are no parties at all. Democracy can therefore be regarded as the vehicle that conveys commodities to the people.

In some States, a government is appointed by the Head of State; it is not chosen from among elected parliamentary representatives. Here again, this can work well subject to the constitution and to national circumstances.

In the light of everything that I have said, it becomes clear that the United Nations has a duty to encourage Member States to respect other nations' approaches to the principle of democracy. Therefore, it remains the responsibility of the United Nations to discourage certain States from being armchair critics without appreciating the attendant national circumstances. So serious is the situation that certain developed countries withhold their financial assistance for development under the pretext that the developing nations fall short of the yardstick of democracy as perceived by those developed countries.

In conclusion, let it be put on record that through a continued sharing of ideas and experiences the principle of democracy will continue to thrive and to sustain the new or restored democracies until they attain a stage of maturity.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

United Nations A/50/PV.56

General Assembly
Fiftieth Session

Official Records

56th plenary meeting
Monday, 13 November 1995, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral ..... (Portugal)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Pibulsonggram (Thailand), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 41 (*continued*)

Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies

Report of the Secretary-General (A/50/332 and Corr. 1)

Draft resolution (A/50/L.19)

Mr. Ayalon (Israel): At the outset I wish to express my delegation's appreciation for the sympathy extended to us by the President, as well as by Member States, in the wake of last week's assassination of the Prime Minister of Israel, Mr. Yitzhak Rabin. To everyone concerned we say: "The State of Israel is heartened by your words and your actions."

We are pleased to see that a growing number of States are recognizing the fundamental relationship between democracy, development, peace, security and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Democratization is not only a moral issue. It is tied directly to the establishment of peace and stability. The existence of a democratic government is the central guarantee for preventing policies of violence and aggression. This stems from its very nature, which places people's destinies in their own hands and is attentive to the people's yearnings for peace and prosperity.

Israel is still mourning the death of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, whose life was tragically cut short by an assassin's bullet. Sadly, political assassinations still occur. Assassination favours no specific system of government; bullets do not differentiate between democrats and dictators. Democracies, however, are best equipped to deal with such despicable acts. In States such as Israel, where the rule of democratic law is firmly entrenched and its values and traditions are enshrined, there is a smooth and orderly transition from one leader to another, even during times of acute emergencies and crises. My delegation is proud of the strength that Israeli democracy has exhibited through these difficult times. We remain committed to the pursuit of democracy and the peace process that our late Prime Minister championed.

The fact that a growing number of countries are embracing democratic principles is one of the most promising developments of our time. But we must not grow complacent. Democracies are still a minority among United Nations Member States, and the dangers they face from within and from without are still formidable. The process of democratization is a long one that must be nurtured and protected in order to bear fruit. It is dependent upon courageous leadership and the development of grass-roots support. Openness and

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participation by people from all walks of life encourage sustainable development. Democratic societies produce pluralistic, free market and enterprising economies. As a result, they enjoy the highest standard of living in the world.

For these reasons, it is appropriate for the United Nations to support the efforts of the Governments of the new or restored democracies. The international community should promote the development of democratic political cultures by instilling democratic values in the people, and especially in the young. Education for democracy should be a never ending process that encourages citizens to be informed and active participants in the noble task of government. This year experts from Israel held seminars on education for democratic elections in Nicaragua and Guatemala. Later this month Israel will be hosting a seminar on the role of labour unions in the transition to a free market economy. Next month another seminar to be held in Israel will deal with development and nurturing democracy through grass-roots organizations, with participants from 25 countries. For 1996 we are planning similar programmes for participants from all over the world.

Economic and humanitarian assistance is also crucial to buttress democratic reforms and to ensure the viability of young democratic institutions. We are certain that the report of the Secretary-General, submitted to the General Assembly at this fiftieth session, will be given the highest priority and attention.

In the past year alone we have contributed to several funds: those for victims of torture, for humanitarian causes in Rwanda and Yugoslavia, for the war crimes Tribunal in Abkhazia and for clearing minefields in Cambodia.

Our promotion of democracy is not limited to charitable contributions. Israel is pleased to have co-sponsored a number of resolutions in this session supporting democratization. We view this as an expression of the importance we attach to the issue, as well as a signal of our readiness to cooperate with the international community in providing assistance to new and restored democracies throughout the world. Accordingly, we endorse the Nicaraguan initiative, and co-sponsor this draft resolution to support new or restored democracies. We look forward to its adoption by consensus.

Mrs. Klein-Loemban Tobing (Suriname): The Republic of Suriname is, as it was last year, one of the sponsors of the draft resolution on support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies, which this year is contained in document A/50/L.19.

In the short history of Suriname as an independent nation, the democratic process has been interrupted at least twice. These interruptions have inflicted great pain and losses upon the Surinamese people. Having gone through difficult years, Suriname is now on the road, admittedly not an easy one, to establish a stable and fully fledged democracy.

While on this road the Surinamese people have experienced the value and impact of international solidarity. In organizing our renewed expressions of freedom and democracy, we have received inestimable encouragement and political support. Countries like my own, in which democracy was interrupted and now has been restored, should be supported. This support is critical in order to countervail the internal and external forces that endanger our emerging democracies.

The delegation of Suriname attaches great importance to the Managua Declaration and Plan of Action, as adopted by the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, held from 4 to 6 July 1994 in Nicaragua.

The participants at that Conference agreed, within a true partnership of democratic nations, to exert themselves to the utmost to serve peace, democracy and security and to continue their efforts to create an environment in which the necessary democratic processes can be developed — an environment in which the United Nations Secretary-General's "An Agenda for Peace" and "An Agenda for Development", as basic instruments for the consolidation of democracy, can be implemented.

My delegation supports the proposal to convene a Third International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, to be held in 1996 in Bucharest. It will provide us with an opportunity to evaluate the results of the implementation of the Managua Declaration and Plan of Action.

The great efforts of the United Nations and its specialized agencies to support and assist new and restored democracies have recently become evident in my country through the organization of a seminar on "Strengthening democracy". This seminar, held from 30 June to 2 July 1995, was organized by the National Assembly of Suriname, the Parliamentarians for Global

Action and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). About 90 representatives of governmental and non-governmental organizations, human rights, religious, youth and women's organizations, political parties, trade unions, educational institutions, the media, the police force of Suriname, private enterprises, and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) participated in the seminar.

During the seminar on "Strengthening democracy", the Surinamese people again stressed their firm belief in democracy and the democratic institutions as the only basis for progress, peace and social well-being. At the seminar, a resolution was adopted in which the participants ensure future cooperation towards: promoting equality between men and women through their equal participation at all levels of political and public life, combating legal inequalities and violence in the family, and striving for mutual respect among members of the family, using, among others, the standards laid down in pertinent international conventions and agreements; secondly, developing strong links between the democratic institutions of Suriname, the organizations that make up its civil society, and the international community; thirdly, increasing the socioeconomic development of Suriname, which is central to fostering a lasting democratic political culture in the country; and fourthly, fostering respect for the rule of law, the constitution and the democratic institutions and procedures that it establishes.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to thank the United Nations and its specialized organizations and agencies for the important contributions they have made towards the consolidation of democracy in Suriname. With the general elections — to be held next year — in sight, it will be of the utmost importance to have the continued attention and support of the international community, in order to consolidate the Surinamese democracy and its democratic institutions and so to protect and consolidate fundamental human rights and freedoms.

The Acting President: I should like to inform the Assembly that the representative of Yemen has asked to participate in the debate on this item.

Inasmuch as the list of speakers was closed on Friday, 10 November, in the morning, may I ask the Assembly whether there is any objection to the inclusion of this delegation in the list of speakers?There is none. Yemen is therefore included in the list.

Mrs. Moutoussamy-Ashe (United States of America): The United States is pleased to address the issues raised under the agenda item entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies". The Vienna World Conference on Human Rights recognized that

> "Democracy, development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Democracy is based on the freely expressed will of the people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems and their full participation in all aspects of their lives". (*A/CONF.157/23, para. 8*)

Bearing this in mind, we welcome the report of the Secretary-General on support for new or restored democracies. We have noted with interest and appreciation the section covering assistance the United Nations system is providing for institution-building, particularly in the areas of creating and strengthening democratic structures of government, enhancing the rule of law, and improving accountability, transparency and quality in public sector management. We strongly agree that the Secretariat and the United Nations agencies should increase cooperation in the area of institution-building and governance, in particular through strengthening capacity-building of democratic institutions.

The Secretary-General's report accurately states that the challenge of democratization in today's world cannot be met by the United Nations system or by Governments alone, although the latter remain the principal actors. Regional organizations, non-governmental organizations and trade unions, to name a few, share the responsibilities of building democratic societies. And around the world, it is ordinary citizens who are doing the hard, sometimes painful work of building democratic societies from the bottom up. They are making democracy work not just on election day, but every day. They are promoting civil societies that respect the rule of law and make Governments accountable.

Many young democracies contend with the vast problems of grinding poverty, illiteracy, rapid population growth, and malnutrition. The survival of these democracies may ultimately depend on their ability to show their citizens that democracy can deliver — that the difficult political and economic choices will pay off soon, and not just in some distant future. But nations that free human potential, that invest in human capital and defend human rights, have a better chance to develop and grow

As President Clinton has stated:

> "Democracies do not wage war against one another; they make better partners in trade and diplomacy; and, despite their inherent problems, they offer the best guarantee for the protection of human rights."

The United States welcomes the challenges raised in the Secretary-General's report on support for new and restored democracies, and we look forward to continuing to work with the United Nations and other international organizations to develop the public and private institutions essential to a working democracy and the rule of law.

Mr. Ziauddin (Bangladesh): Bangladesh was happy to participate in the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, held in Managua from 4 to 6 July 1994, and was party to the Declaration and Plan of Action adopted by the Conference. We therefore welcomed and endorsed the inscription on the agenda of the item entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies". We also fully supported General Assembly resolution 49/30 of 7 December 1994.

It therefore goes without saying that my delegation strongly supports the continuing involvement of the United Nations system, and, indeed, the international community, individually and collectively, in supporting efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate democracy. In this regard, we take particular cognisance of the Secretary-General's caveat that the United Nations system

> "does not endorse or promote any specific form of government"

and that

> "Democracy is not a model to be copied from certain States, but a goal to be attained by all people and assimilated by all cultures." (*A/50/332, para. 5*)

He goes on to refer to democratization as:

> "a process by which an authoritarian society becomes increasingly participatory through such mechanisms as periodic elections to representative bodies, the accountability of public officials, a transparent public administration, an independent judiciary and a free press. It is inherent in this concept that democratization does not necessarily lead immediately to a fully democratic society. That goal may be attained only in steps, with an authoritarian society gradually becoming less so." (*A/50/332, para. 6*)

We fully agree with this view.

A factor of pre-eminent importance that Bangladesh would like to stress is that democracy is not only a sustained process, but provides the only long-term and sustainable route to successful development. Democracy and development are integrally interlinked. Just as nations have a responsibility to promote better standards of living as the essential base for restoring democracy, so the international community must provide a more conducive external environment through trade, investment and the transfer of technology. Furthermore, Bangladesh fully supports as relevant the essential premise of the Managua Declaration that the democratic process and democratic progress in our countries should not occur in isolation, but must be provided with an avenue for continuous communication and contact.

We welcome the Secretary General's comprehensive report pursuant to resolution 49/30, which remains a useful compendium of actual and potential areas of support for the democratization process by the United Nations system. We have taken specific cognisance of his observation and recommendations relating to electoral assistance; the role of international observers; means of ensuring the durability of the democratization process; administrative aspects of governance; cooperation in institution-building and in such key areas of involvement as the strengthening of leadership skills and political institutions; support for effective judiciaries to guarantee the rule of law and protection of human rights; and the strengthening of linkages between government and civil society through non-governmental organizations, the media, local government and professional associations and through decentralization. Through support for democratic structures and forms of government and a smooth continuum from relief to sustainable development, secure and solid foundations for peace, democratization and development can be achieved. The entire process requires a multiplicity of partners working towards democratization.

We therefore support the draft resolution now before us and call on the Secretary-General to present a report to the General Assembly, at its next session, on the implementation of the present draft resolution, including ways and means to enable the Organization to respond effectively and in an integrated manner to requests from Member States for assistance in this field.

My delegation believes that in the wake of the important Third International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, scheduled to be held in Bucharest in 1996, and the General Assembly resolutions, the concerns of countries with new or restored democracies will be kept under scrutiny on a continuous basis.

Mr. Domingo (Philippines): The Philippines joins our brother delegations in supporting draft resolution A/50/L.19, which aims to move forward the initiative expressed in last year's consensus resolution 49/30. Like many other delegations, we also appreciate the Secretary General's report on United Nations efforts to assist, at the request of Member States, in their democratization. We believe, however, that there is a need to intensify and optimize United Nations efforts.

As noted both by the First International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, which was held in Manila in 1988, and by the Second International Conference, held in Managua in 1994, many problems, both internal and external, assail new and restored democracies. The national euphoria resulting from the overthrow of a tyrannic dictatorship or from a deliberate choice, through legal processes, to change a form of government is, in most cases, as we have observed in the last few years, soon dissipated by a realization that making a democracy work is not as easy as proclaiming a democratic Government.

Internally, there are forces of the "left" and of the "right" which tend to destabilize Governments. Leftist forces seek to give more privileges, rights and benefits to masses of people who seem to be left behind — justly or unjustly — in the political, social and economic adjustment processes. Rightist forces suspect anarchy in adjustment processes and seek to strengthen unduly the powers of government in order to maintain order where national discipline seems lacking. In many instances, minorities within the body politic, encouraged by the prevailing spirit of democratization, strive for recognition of their identity at the expense of national unity and integrity.

Externally, new and restored democracies — often constrained by mistakes or by habits from a long heritage of State-controlled economies — find it difficult to compete with countries experienced in capitalistic free trade. Thus, there is a need for new and restored democracies to be helped, both by sympathetic and friendly countries that are aware of the difficulties they face and by international organizations, like the United Nations, which could assist technically and financially in helping democratizing States achieve stability and self-reliance.

Not far beyond the immediate adjustment needs of new and restored democracies is the need for development. The linkage of development with democracy should be obvious. Development fosters that domestic stability which is a *sine qua non* for democracy, as well as international peace and security - the requisite environment for the nurturing of democracy. It is thus important for the United Nations — an Organization committed to the

> "prevention and removal of threats to peace"

— to support the efforts of Governments to

> "promote and consolidate new or restored democracies"

United Nations support for democratic and democratizing Governments should be based on the faith of its founding fathers

> "in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small",

which are elements essential to a democracy.

I should like to reiterate what the Philippine delegation said last year on this point. United Nations support, to be effective and durable, should be based on serious study of the scope of support, of ways and means to achieve objectives, as well as of Organization-wide acceptance of the objectives and the means. What, in concrete terms, can the United Nations do? What, in concrete terms, can it not do or should it not do?

Thus, the Philippines sees the value of the operative paragraph of the draft resolution requesting the Secretary-General to submit a report to the fifty-first session of the General Assembly on innovative ways and means to enable the Organization, in support of the efforts of Governments, as requested by Member States, to respond effectively and in an integrated manner.

In order that the Secretary-General's study may be properly appreciated by the general membership of the United Nations, the General Assembly should include in the agenda of its fifty-first session an item entitled "Support by the United Nations system for the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies".

The Conference of New or Restored Democracies was first held in Manila in 1988, moved to Latin America in 1994 and will be held in Europe — in Bucharest — next year. The whole world is interested in, and concerned about, the aspirations to and problems of democratization. Many countries seek United Nations assistance for their efforts to practise democracy. We hope that the Secretary-General's report and its early discussion by the General Assembly will serve as an important input to the Third International Conference of New or Restored Democracies.

New and restored democracies are becoming a very relevant force in today's world. May they continue to grow and thrive in their democratic way of life, for the peace and security of the entire world.

Mr. Cárdenas (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation is particularly pleased to speak on this agenda item, concerning the support by the United Nations system for the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies.

As the Heads of State or Government declared at the latest Ibero-American Summit held in my country last month, democracy, respect for human rights and respect for the fundamental freedoms of the human person are essential values for our peoples. These three values, whose defence is of great importance to our country, are three central pillars of the modern State, necessarily affecting the prosperity and stability of our societies.

Democracy is undoubtedly the best system of government for proper channelling of the popular will. It produces Governments with a mandate — a mandate to whose fulfilment those Governments must be unshakeably committed. If they act honestly and effectively they are rewarded at the ballot box. The democratic process also makes it possible to correct abuses and to eliminate corruption or arbitrary action by the powerful, who are inexorably replaced when the people lose trust in them.

Latin America was plagued by totalitarian regimes for a number of decades. However, in recent years, in the new international situation, a growing number of countries have adopted and recognized democracy as the best system of government. There have been many elections in the region, producing general expressions of commitment to democracy and creating new areas of peace and dialogue, which are essential for development, something that is urgently needed in our countries.

In the framework of democracy and the freedom that it guarantees, initiative flourishes and political and economic freedom results in increased opportunities. This is not just a romantic idea; the practical lesson of history is that oppression and authoritarianism always come to an end by making insecure the very regimes that they support.

The modern concept of development is based on these freedoms, but also on the responsibilities of the State, representing society, which must guarantee respect for individual freedoms and must strengthen the system itself.

Respect for individual freedoms, human rights, freedom of expression, tolerance, respect for justice: these are all values that are established slowly — slowly by comparison with the speed with which totalitarian regimes usually seize their illegitimate power. Thus, countries that enjoy democracy today have an unavoidable duty to promote it where it does not exist and to renew their full support for the consolidation of transitional processes.

That is why my country is represented here today, just as it was in Managua last year at the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, speaking in support of this objective, which is a matter of priority for us. The United Nations, under its Charter, has a historic responsibility to help consolidate new democracies and prevent any return to anachronistic systems of oppression.

For these reasons, my country, with total conviction, has no hesitation in endorsing and co-sponsoring the draft resolution.

Mr. Pirozhkov (Ukraine) (*interpretation from Russian*): The process of moving towards a democratic society, engaged in by many States which have taken the road of renewal and progress, is gaining the recognition and support of the world community. We can say without exaggeration that this is a dominant trend in the development of world civilization on the eve of the third millennium, and there is no doubt that it will intensify in the twenty-first century.

In this year of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, the delegation of Ukraine reiterates the high value that it attaches to the Organization's multifaceted activities in the areas of peace-keeping and conflict-prevention, help for the poor and the unfortunate and

efforts to unite countries and peoples on the basis of the principles of democracy, justice and progress. Within these extensive activities, support for the initiatives of the International Conferences of New or Restored Democracies — the first of which was held in Manila in 1989, and the second in Managua in 1994 — constitutes a new and important trend.

We can observe with satisfaction that, for many new States that emerged at the end of the twentieth century, the Secretary-General's interesting and comprehensive report on this subject clarified mechanisms for the practical realization of the principles and strategy involved in the creation of a modern civil society. Moreover, the types of interaction between international organizations and national States in respect of democratic changes in individual States that are engulfed in civil war and have deeply rooted authoritarian traditions have become clearer. This aspect of the activities of the United Nations system requires special attention and demands respect for the peoples of the new States, where the democratic process is still very fragile and is only now being put on a solid foundation.

As a newly sovereign State, Ukraine is entirely at one with the new or restored democracies, which have actively declared their commitment to democratic choice and have broadened participation to large segments of their populations in the processes of social, political and economic change, through such mechanisms as nationwide elections to representative bodies, accountability of State officials, a transparent public administration, a reformed judiciary and a free press.

This multifaceted process of democratic transformation is taking place in full measure in our country too. This is confirmed by the fact that on 9 November 1995, in Strasbourg, Ukraine was solemnly admitted as a full-fledged member of the Council of Europe. It has acceded to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and is constantly occupied with developing a multi-party system, establishing free and independent mass media, consolidating democratic structures of government, and carrying out legal reform.

Our delegation would especially like to emphasize that inter-ethnic peace has been firmly established in sovereign Ukraine, and there are no ethnic conflicts. This undeniably shows that we are on the right lines in such an extremely important and delicate sphere as State policy on national groups.

We note that Ukraine has confidently embarked on the path of democratic transformation and will never voluntarily abandon it. Of course, there are still many obstacles and difficulties on this path that are typical for post-socialist countries with economies in transition, but for our country there is not — and cannot be — any other alternative to the establishment of an open civil society.

We pay tribute to the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies. At the same time, we place much hope in the United Nations system to establish constant

> "trusteeship over new States in the process of formation, in order to make the use of force inadmissible and ensure adherence to the established norms of international law" *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Plenary Meetings, 35th meeting, p. 6)*

as suggested by the President of Ukraine, Mr. L. D. Kuchma, at the Special Commemorative Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization.

The delegation of Ukraine fully agrees with the contents of the report by the Secretary-General on the support by the United Nations system for new and restored democracies, in particular the proposition that:

> "Without national and global confidence in the essential elements required for the development of a robust economy, democratization will be threatened". *(A/50/332, para. 112)*

In this connection, I would like to inform the General Assembly about a new programme of activities of the Government of Ukraine, adopted on 11 October 1995 by the Supreme Council, the highest legislative body. This programme is aimed primarily at achieving macroeconomic stabilization and halting the slump in production, which is the main source of growth in living standards for the population. Implementation of this programme will be accompanied by the adoption of a new Constitution, development of legislation, structural and industrial readjustment of the economy, consolidation of the financial and monetary system, retraining of public service personnel and a rise in business activity.

In the realization of these plans, we feel the understanding and support of the international financial organizations for the problems of Ukraine, and their

readiness to render assistance in overcoming the complex problems of the transitional period. Today Ukraine stands at the beginning of the road to transformational reforms, but we believe that it will not change direction and will become a full-fledged member of the community of democratic States.

In the countries with new or restored democracies, new negative problems are also appearing, whose solution reaches beyond the borders of those States. These are the problems of refugees and illegal migrants, organized crime and international terrorism, the transit of narcotic drugs and so on. As the democratic institutions of the new democracies are strengthened, as pointed out in document A/50/332, a reduction in the assistance and attention given to these States by the United Nations system can be foreseen. In this connection, in the opinion of the Ukrainian delegation, international cooperation between the United Nations and the new democracies should not die out, but, on the contrary, should be reinforced, bearing in mind that every positive process, unfortunately, also has negative consequences, which must be neutralized and eliminated; this can be achieved only through the united efforts of representatives of the world community.

The development and consolidation of new or restored democracies is a global problem for mankind, the solution of which, we hope, will occupy the place it deserves in United Nations activities in the twenty-first century.

The Ukrainian delegation supports the draft resolution introduced by the delegation of Nicaragua on this agenda item and requests that Ukraine be included in the list of co-sponsors of document A/50/L.19.

Mr. Sychou (Belarus) (*interpretation from Russian*): First of all, I should like to thank United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali for his informative and comprehensive report to the General Assembly on the forms and mechanisms of support by the United Nations system for new and restored democracies.

At this session, as it did last year, the Republic of Belarus has joined in co-sponsoring the draft resolution on this question. We consider that the process of creation and democratic development of States which have experienced totalitarianism in their history and then rejected it deserves full support and encouragement by the United Nations and by the world community as a whole. The fact that the United Nations is tackling this topic in its fiftieth anniversary year is the result of the radical changes that have occurred in the post-confrontational world and bears witness to the ability of the United Nations to react energetically to the new challenges of time.

The Republic of Belarus, which in March 1994 adopted a new Constitution focusing first and foremost on people and respect for their inalienable rights and freedoms, and which has elected the first President in its history, has embarked on democratic reforms. The experience of the early years of independence and progress on the road to reform unfortunately has shown that the processes of transformation of political and economic systems require large material and social resources, and do not always go forward painlessly.

In the case of Belarus, these processes have been burdened by the consequences of the erstwhile senseless arms race, which resulted in the accumulation on its territory of a considerable quantity of armaments which our State must today reduce in accordance with its international obligations. The solution of questions linked with the Chernobyl nuclear plant accident are a serious additional burden for the national economy. However, whatever the specific problems characteristic of each State experiencing a period of transition to a democratic form of social organization, one thing is beyond question: namely, that overcoming the obstacles standing in the way depends on the effectiveness of the interrelationship between democracy and development.

The Managua Declaration, adopted at the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies in July 1994, reaffirms the proposition that:

> "Development, as one of the fundamental rights of all nations, promotes the full exercise of democracy". (*A/49/713, para. 6*)

At the same time, the stable development of new or restored democracies depends on the successful reform of its political and economic institutions, and we believe that the United Nations possibilities in that direction are far from having been exhausted.

In conclusion, I should like to confirm the attachment of the Government of Belarus to the principles of democracy, political pluralism and the protection of human rights, and to express the hope that the draft resolution on "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies" will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Laing (Belize): Democracy is often painful. When the old order changes, politicians in power, bureaucrats and others associated with them suffer. So do their domestic and foreign collaborators, since scholars, governmental colleagues, diplomats and others now have to develop new relationships, friendships and even loyalties.

Democracy, in the sense of the process of the exercise of the popular will, is often painful as well. On the one hand, the masses do not always use the best table manners in exercising their choice. On the other hand, the obvious choice of the people — the anointed — sometimes do not accept the popular will and do not serve.

When the people have spoken, their anointed representatives, once in office, often interpret their mandate in ways not acceptable to the people. The value system, concepts and laws of the new leaders might provoke a desire, or even a clamour, for that which was recently jettisoned.

However, centuries of accumulated history have taught us that the alternatives to democracy are no substitute for that fragile and often bitter plant. If pain accompanies the pleasure of democracy, this is merely a human reality. We must therefore express heartfelt praise to those nations Members of this Organization that, with little prior tutelage in or experience of democracy, have taken the giant step into that *terra incognita*.

All praise is due to the Secretary-General for the valuable efforts at undergirding democracy described in his report contained in document A/50/332. Praise is also due to the Commonwealth for similar efforts. We must also ensure that both organizations are provided with support, especially voluntary support, in the performance of their remarkable tasks.

The report discusses the task of promoting a democratic culture. In that connection, it stresses the importance of nurturing a climate for pluralistic political parties and movements. My delegation wishes to support the various suggestions, including the importance of establishing systems for appropriate training.

Regarding the report's discussion of the need for free and independent media, we are impressed with the efforts of the Department of Public Information (DPI) to support independent and pluralistic media in various regions. We wish to stress the importance of such media's being completely autonomous, if not autochthonous. This is particularly necessary in these days of globalism in the media, since global uniformity is, logically, anathema to true freedom, independence and democracy. We hope, too, that in its seminars, in the context of the political process, DPI stresses the importance of the media's renouncing the use and abuse of sound bites that distort and deceive.

As the report suggests, establishing an adequate political culture requires broad-based civic education. This could be aided by the sponsorship of study visits by politicians and others to appropriate countries with well-developed electoral systems. However, ways and means must also be found to inculcate in politicians, who often operate systems of spoils, the value of love, a word we do not often utter in this hallowed Hall.

One cannot express anything less than unstinting praise for the numerous actions of electoral assistance taken by the Organization, as described in the report. As with the similar actions which have been taken by the Commonwealth, one is bound to recall that a major ingredient of the venerable doctrine of self-determination is the human right to democracy. One may therefore legitimately ask whether or not there has developed a universal legal norm commanding broad-based democracy. Of course, any such universal requirement of democracy would have to be in line with the desiderata of decentralization and respect for and compliance with the traditional structures of authority in society, as discussed in the report. Likewise, the structures of government which, pursuant to that norm, must be built should indeed include the other human rights, as the report seems to indicate. However, we would remind representatives that such human rights should, in addition to civil and political rights, include cultural, economic and social rights.

Such a broad-based democracy must clearly incorporate a set of firm legal structures. But, as the report clearly indicates, those structures should not, willy-nilly, connote a

> "wholesale transfer of Western-based legislation" *(A/50/332, para. 103)*

After all, democracy, by definition, must have a variable content, for which the United Nations must provide appropriate and tailor-made assistance. Happily, the report identifies the importance of assistance through capacity-building, civil service reform and improving accountability, transparency and quality of public-sector management. In this connection, the baneful character of

corruption is stressed. My delegation urges that efforts to extirpate this scourge should be no less far-reaching than those directed at the evils of terrorism and narcotics. And they should reach, as far as is appropriate, into the private sector, which is increasingly a substitute for government.

That thought leads to consideration of the extent to which unmitigated globalism is consistent with democracy. Inasmuch as globalism connotes uninhibited concentration and monopolization of business organizations, production and markets, it must be asked whether it is compatible with the popularism inherent in democracy. My delegation hopes that this subject will be taken up by the Secretariat in its future work.

Finally, my delegation fully expects that, internationally, democracy will continue to be developed as a relevant and vibrant value and institution. As Belizean Prime Minister Manuel Esquivel recently remarked to the General Assembly, the unfinished business of this Organization is equality. My delegation believes that equality is a vital aspect of democracy which we must enshrine in such fields as the role of small States in the global system, the participation of women and the composition and structure of the Security Council.

Our thanks are due the Philippines and Nicaragua, which have kept before the General Assembly and the world this important subject of support for the new or restored democracies. However, as we have indicated, the subject needs to be extended to include all democracies.

Mr. Ordzhonikidze (Russian Federation) *(interpretation from Russian):* The movement of countries of new and renewed democracy was born very recently. Its history is not long, not as long as the history of democracies or the 50-year history of the United Nations, which emerged in response to the challenge posed to world society by totalitarianism.

Nevertheless, the movement has already passed two major milestones — the First and Second International Conferences of New or Restored Democracies, held in Manila and Managua, respectively — and we are gradually preparing the ideological foundations for cooperation between the States participants in the movement. The Managua Declaration and the Plan of Action adopted last year do indeed bode well for the future, and we hope that the next Conference, in Bucharest, will lead to an even greater understanding that the tasks to be carried out by States with different forms of democratic structures are common to all of us.

The ideas underlying the movement of countries with new or restored democracies cannot but be consonant with the ideals of the community of nations. Consolidation of democracy and political stability promote sustainable development and economic growth. As we see it, the value of democratization is primarily that, having become an integral part of the internal political processes, it provides a basis for reconciliation, tolerance, full application of, respect for and defence of human rights, and the development of social practices based on the peaceful search for constructive solutions.

At a time when democracies, proceeding from the pluralism of ideas and interests as expressed by parties, movements and ethnic, religious and language groups, are exerting efforts towards further development, people are learning tolerance and beginning to understand that potential differences are not grounds for crude force, terrorist acts or appeals to separatism; and at a time when ways of stabilizing internal situations are no longer the main concern of Governments, real preconditions begin to exist for sustained economic growth and social development geared to the individual.

In our view, awareness of the positive potential of these common ideas served as the basis for political consensus and the adoption last year of the resolution recognizing the importance of the Managua Declaration and the Plan of Action and requesting the Secretary-General to study the ways and mechanisms in which the United Nations system could support the efforts of the Governments of new and restored democracies. Today, relying on this important document, States can continue the dialogue on what must be done so that efforts by Governments to develop democracy not only enjoy the support of the United Nations system, but so that in fact the very focused activities of the world community itself can serve to promote and strengthen democratic structures in Member States.

We believe that putting the question this way could provide a powerful incentive to develop respect for human rights and the rule of law and legality and to put a brake on the danger of the disintegration of State structures or the emergence of internal conflicts. It is not necessary to mention the resources that are used by the United Nations system to deal with the consequences of internal conflict, but of course these United Nations efforts cannot in themselves and all at once fully heal the wounds inflicted on peoples by aggressive nationalism and contemporary manifestations of racism or religious intolerance. Massive flows of refugees from

places where the democratic institutions, because of their weakness have not been able to challenge conflicts about to erupt into political discussion and constructive solutions, are sad testimony to this.

The report of the Secretary-General highlights some aspects of the question of how to provide United Nations system support for the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies. Perhaps it is not altogether fortuitous that the main focus has been on assistance in holding elections. Democracy, as is well known, begins with the awareness of the right of everybody to participate in the government of his country either directly or through free'y elected representatives, and the Russian Federation, consistently following this difficult process of step-by-step constitutional reform, will gladly welcome international observers, including United Nations observers, for our elections in December.

But, in our view, no less important than the holding of elections are such activities of the United Nations as providing assistance to States in establishing free and independent mass- information media, promoting the establishment of educational systems in the area of human rights, establishing and strengthening democratic structures of administration, ensuring the supremacy of law, and so forth.

Recognizing that democracy and development are among the main foundations of international peace and security, the States participating in the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies agreed that strengthening democratic processes is a key element in consolidating peace and international security. Russia cannot but welcome this approach.

Mr. Jele (South Africa): My delegation considers that the agenda item before us represents one of the important aspects of the principles guiding this body.

Even as a young democracy, South Africa has already experienced many of the facets that the draft resolution and the Secretary-General's report address. Having experienced the destructive and anti-human force of apartheid, we owe it to ourselves and to humanity to order our affairs in such a manner that an effective and lasting blow is struck against any form of dictatorship.

We believe Member States must build on the cause, common to us all, that everywhere on the globe there is a process leading to the entrenchment of democratic systems of government. The ordinary people of the world must have the freedom to determine their destiny, unhindered by tyrants and dictators. However, we must guard against the tendency to project certain models of democracy as a universal panacea and role models for all Member States.

The role of the United Nations system to support efforts by Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies is a vital one for those States emerging into democracy. The United Nations has vast experience in this area and should support efforts towards good governance. In this context we welcome the Secretary-General's report contained in document A/50/332.

We in South Africa are engaged in the process of redefining ourselves in democratic terms. Our drive towards a democratic dispensation is motivated by the unshakeable belief that only democracy can and will satisfy the yearning of equality and freedom for all the people of South Africa, Black and White.

Our Government of National Unity is committed to a people-centred society of liberty. Far from using ethnic diversity to promote racial domination and tyranny, as witnessed in the dark days of apartheid, the new Government recognizes ethnic and cultural diversity as part of the rich tapestry of our country, a creative contribution to building a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic South Africa. We therefore consider it vital to build a future premised on fundamental human rights, and for the realization of this objective we pursue an approach that recognizes the indivisibility of rights and that perceives no difference between civil and political rights, on the one hand, and cultural, social and economic rights, on the other.

The new Parliament of South Africa now operates within the framework of a Constitution which is the supreme law of the country, and under which the independent Constitutional Court serves as an effective mechanism to ensure that Government actions are in line with our Bill of Human Rights.

The Secretary-General has touched on a number of key issues that are essential for the promotion and consolidation of democracy. A multiparty political system, free and independent media, the building of a political culture through civic education, regular elections, the creation and strengthening of democratic structures of government, and respect for the rule of law are some of the most important aspects. Just as important are government accountability and transparency.

The challenge to the United Nations is to answer the question: given our interdependence, what is it that we can and must do to ensure that democracy, peace and prosperity prevail everywhere?

My delegation believes that the elaboration of the new world order must of necessity centre on this Organization and that appropriate forums should be found in which we could all participate to help determine the shape of the new world. We believe, as our President has said, that the four elements that would need to be knit together in fashioning that new, universal reality are: democracy, peace, prosperity and interdependence.

As we continue to debate the reform of the United Nations, we believe that the Organization should once more turn its focused and sustained attention to the basics of everything that makes for a better world for all humanity. In this regard, the thought-provoking observations and recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his report deserve our careful consideration.

We fully support the draft resolution before us and hope it will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Alakwaa (Yemen) (*interpretation from Arabic*): No one values the blessings of democracy more than those who have been deprived of it. We, in the Republic of Yemen, have included in the Constitution of the United Yemen a number of principal articles that guarantee democracy and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms. We have not confined ourselves to legislating and laying down rules and regulations that do just that, but have gone beyond the theoretical framework into the field of genuine actual exercise of democracy. In the political arena in our country there are now more than 30 political parties and more than 100 newspapers and periodicals. The first parliamentary elections in United Yemen were organized on the 27th of April 1993, with the participation of all national forces without exception. In short, all segments of Yemeni society now have the right to participate in policy-formulation and in decision-making as well as in the actual implementation of such policies and decisions. The Government of United Yemen is now engaged in returning confiscated properties to their rightful owners and in compensating those who sustain a loss as a result of such return. It has also cancelled all restrictions on emigration. There is no citizen that is now deprived of the right to travel abroad.

While we agree with the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/50/332, in particular with paragraphs 5 and 7 of its introduction, to the effect that democracy is not a model to be copied from certain States, and on the ways and means whereby assistance may be given in this regard, we believe that notwithstanding the existence of special circumstances and characteristics in certain societies, this should not prevent the establishment or restoration of democracy albeit gradually, until such circumstances and characteristics allow for the adoption of a genuine and developing democratic system that would be founded on the participation by all in action and in the business of Government.

We share the opinion voiced by the Foreign Minister of Nicaragua, namely that democracy is not an end in itself and that is not a cure-all for the ills of society. Yes, indeed, it is no panacea for all problems, but it does afford all social forces the opportunity of working together in seeking solutions to those problems. We value the assistance extended by the United Nations for the consolidation or restoration of democracy. Incidentally, preparations will be made shortly in the Republic of Yemen for the holding of the second parliamentary elections in the context of our abiding unity. We shall be grateful for any assistance that may be extended to us by this Organization, by any Member State or by non-governmental organizations in our forthcoming electoral process.

Finally, we support fully the draft resolution contained in document A/50/L.19, soon to be adopted by this Assembly.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on item 41.

I should like to inform members that action on draft resolution A/50/L.19 will be taken at a later date, to be announced.

Agenda item 47

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

The Acting President: Members will recall that at its 108th meeting, held on 18 September 1995, the General Assembly adopted decision 49/499, by which the Assembly decided

"that the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council should continue its work, taking into account, *inter alia*, the progress achieved during the forty-eighth and forty-ninth sessions and the views expressed during the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, including its Special Commemorative Meeting on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, and submit a report to the Assembly before the end of its fiftieth session, including any agreed recommendations".

In this connection, I should like to recall, for the attention of members, document A/49/965, which contains a letter dated 15 September 1995 from the Permanent Representatives of Finland and Thailand to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly. The two Permanent Representatives, in their capacities as Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group during the forty-ninth session, forward to the Assembly in document A/49/965 the compendium of their observations and assessments, their discussion papers, and proposals and other documents presented to the Open-ended Working Group.

Before calling on the first speaker, I should like to propose that the list of speakers in the debate on this item be closed today at noon.

It was so decided.

The Acting President: There are already 70 names on the list of speakers. I therefore request those representatives wishing to participate in the debate to add their names to the list as soon as possible. In view of the long list, I should like to appeal to members to keep their statements to no more than 10 minutes, if possible.

Mr. Martínez Blanco (Honduras) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Honduras is speaking in the debate on item 47 of the agenda, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters", on behalf also of the Central American countries of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Panama.

Central America welcomes and takes note of document A/49/965, which the General Assembly has before it today. We would like to thank the Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group, the Permanent Representatives of Finland and Thailand, for their dedicated efforts in preparing this document in their personal capacity.

Legitimacy and effectiveness are the two characteristics that must distinguish the Security Council of the United Nations before the international community. Two other goals sought by the Working Group are transparency and democracy in the work of the Council, the organ upon which the Charter has conferred primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Making the Security Council into a more representative, credible and effective body with a more equitable composition is the general objective of the effort begun with the adoption, in this Hall, of resolutions 47/62 and 48/26.

Much was done to achieve these objectives during the forty-ninth regular session of the General Assembly. The dialogue in the Working Group made it possible to identify some points of agreement among Member States and to draw up a compendium of ideas and proposals, which will serve as an important basis for the negotiating stage to be undertaken by the Working Group. However, major differences remain that will require in-depth analysis by the Working Group.

Central America shares the view that the objective of increasing the membership of the Security Council is to enhance its legitimacy while maintaining its effectiveness. The increase will have to reflect the changes that have taken place on the international scene, including the substantial increase in the membership of the United Nations. The desire expressed by the Members of the United Nations to enhance the effectiveness of the Security Council will become reality if we make the Council as representative an organ as possible, reflecting the universal character of the United Nations and including within it the greatest possible variety of interests and views, and if we adopt, as guiding principles to that end, those of the sovereign equality of States and of equitable geographical distribution, as provided in the Charter.

Central America believes that the principle of democratization in international relations requires greater representativity in the organs of the United Nations. Only a Security Council with a broad membership based on the principle of equitable geographical representation can have the necessary legitimacy to act on behalf of all the Members of the United Nations, as it should pursuant to Article 24, paragraph 1, of the Charter. Only a broad

membership can give the Security Council greater credibility, for its members will then be inclined to greater participation in the collective responsibility of the maintenance of international peace and security.

We recognize the importance for the composition of the Council of the participation, as permanent members, of those States that have global political and economic influence and the capacity to share in, and contribute financially to, the responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. However, we would deem it unacceptable if, through the application of those criteria, only developed countries could be admitted to the category of permanent membership. That would be incompatible with the principles of the sovereign equality of all Members of the United Nations and the democratization of international relations. We believe that, in order to arrive at a consensus in selecting new permanent members, we should include developing countries in that category, applying the same criteria as those set forth in the Charter for the election of non-permanent members. Ideally, the category of permanent membership would be eliminated gradually, because its creation was justified by past realities but is no longer appropriate in the new international context.

The Central American region strongly supports the idea of increasing the number of non-permanent members of the Security Council, in view of the need for equitable geographical representation. In this context, we believe that the various proposals submitted by the Member States deserve careful analysis. We are of the view that the countries of Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia should have increased representation in the Council. The United Nations has grown considerably in the past 30 years. This justifies increasing the membership of the Council, mainly with developing countries — which constitute the majority of Member States — so that their interests can be duly represented, thereby preserving the pluralistic nature of the Council and democratizing its decision-taking processes. We believe also that the non-permanent members should have an opportunity to be re-elected alternately. To that end, Article 23, paragraph 2, of the Charter would have to be amended. This measure could help to improve representation in the Council.

The countries of Central America believe that the right of veto should be limited and ultimately abolished. The circumstances at the end of the Second World War that gave rise to the veto have changed and there is no longer any justification whatsoever for the veto. Central Americans feel that the right of veto should not be granted to any potential permanent members of the Security Council. Equal treatment for new and old permanent members is an unacceptable legal basis for granting it, also because the veto in itself is an anti-democratic practice and is contrary to the principle of the sovereign equality of States. Any reform of the Council will have to settle this issue with a view ultimately to abolishing the veto. To that end, we agree with the proposal to hold periodic reviews of the veto and other voting procedures.

With regard to other matters related to the Security Council, Central America is satisfied with the progress made towards increasing transparency and with regard to the Council's working methods. The measures already adopted, which simply reflect the discussions held in the Open-ended Working Group, are a significant contribution to increasing the Council's legitimacy and credibility. We believe that these measures should be institutionalized and reviewed periodically, and we agree that there should be more consultations between the Security Council and interested parties, regional arrangements and organizations and countries that contribute troops to peace-keeping operations. Similarly, we acknowledge that it is important for the Security Council to adopt specific measures to improve the working relationship with the General Assembly, with other United Nations bodies, and with States that are not members of the Council.

The Central American region feels that the results of the efforts made at the last two sessions by the Open-ended Working Group are highly significant and lay a firm foundation for beginning the Security Council reform process. We are sure that the various proposals made by Member States or groups of Member States are all useful and will help to expedite negotiations. As the Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group have recognized, much remains to be done before broad agreement is reached among all Member States, but to secure that agreement we should continue to give impetus to the activities of the Open-ended Working Group.

Finally, the Central American States share the view that Member States should take full advantage of the momentum generated by the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations to use this fiftieth session of the General Assembly to work towards the substantial achievements we have set in motion.

We hope that the reform of the Security Council will be realistic and inspired by democratic principles and objective criteria so that all Members of the United

Nations, including small States, have the opportunity to participate in the Council and thereby to help it shoulder its tremendous responsibility.

Mr. Kamunanwire (Uganda): In the light of statements made during the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, it had been the wish of most delegations that the settlement of the question of equitable representation on and an increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters would be one of the most important outcomes of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. Unfortunately, this is not happening. Instead, differences and divergent views on the issue continue to make a breakthrough difficult.

My delegation, however, recognizes and commends the seriousness and serious efforts of the President of the General Assembly and the Chairman and the two Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group on the matter. In particular, we pay special tribute to Ambassador Wilhelm Breitenstein of Finland and Ambassador Nitya Pibulsonggram of Thailand for the achievements so far. In their report, the Vice-Chairmen conclude that there is general agreement on the expansion of the Security Council and on reviewing its working methods and other matters related to its functioning in a way that further strengthens its capacity and effectiveness, enhances its representative character and improves its working efficiency. This achievement should now enable us to resolutely narrow the crucial issues of how to expand the Council and review its working methods.

A number of proposals have been made on guiding principles for the democratization of the Security Council. The principle of equitable geographical distribution of permanent seats in the Security Council, reflecting the current expanded membership of the United Nations should be of the essence. Other considerations such as

> "the capacity to share global responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security" (*A/49/965, para. 6*)

should not demean another principle, that of political commitment by all Member States. Moreover, any attempt to give prominence only to the most powerful nations will serve to negate the principle of the equal sovereignty of all Member States. The position of Uganda is that Africa should be allocated permanent seats in the expanded Security Council proportional to the size of its membership in the United Nations.

Any genuine reform of the Security Council must address the question of the veto. Whatever categories and types of membership are finally agreed upon, all members of the Security Council should exercise equal powers. Either the veto power applies to all or it should be dispensed with. The argument that the veto power

> "had ensured the continued participation of the major Powers in the Organization" (*ibid., para. 13*)

sends messages of domination; and it not only undermines democratic principles but also contravenes the Charter principle of the sovereign equality of all Member States.

In its present form, the Security Council has initiated commendable measures and new practices aimed at improvements in transparency and working methods. This momentum should continue so that the measures taken and practices adopted reflect total transparency and clearly streamlined methods of work within the Council. In particular, there should be a mutual relationship between the Council and the other organs of the United Nations, especially the General Assembly.

In this respect, the General Assembly, as the supreme policy-making organ, should be constantly and fully informed on all issues and strategies of which the Council is seized, as the Assembly is the most representative forum, the body where all Member States have equal opportunity to express their concerns and interests with regard to various issues — including peace-keeping and international security — that affect the international community.

Further, with regard to the issue of Security Council consultations concerning peace-keeping operations, it is logical and important to include regional organizations and countries of the region concerned. These not only play a complementary role in preventive diplomacy and peace-keeping but also, and in particular, bear the brunt of the influx of those whom conflict has made refugees or displaced persons, as well as providing logistical bases for peace-keeping operations.

If my delegation is pressing for democratization of the Security Council and for strengthening of the General Assembly, it is because an inequitable United Nations will serve neither the ends of peace nor those of development.

Mr. Fulci (Italy): As I am speaking for the first time under your presidency, Sir, I should like to begin by recognizing the very important contribution that you, as the Permanent Representative of Thailand, have made to the work and activities of the United Nations, thanks to your experience, talent and impartiality.

We held the very first meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on reform of the Security Council on 19 January 1994. We have been discussing this question, at times very intensely, for almost two years.

We have, by and large, reached consensus on some essentials — namely, that the Council must operate with transparency, effectiveness and efficiency and must have better coordination with the General Assembly and with other United Nations bodies. But no progress whatsoever has been made on the essential issue of enlargement. Positions on this point have not become any closer; if anything, they are further apart and more entrenched than ever. Consequently, we missed the initial target: to agree on reform in time for the fiftieth anniversary. The only thing which we seem to have agreed on is that we are in profound disagreement on how to enlarge the Council.

The reasons behind this disagreement are very clear to the Italian delegation. We are confronted by two opposing visions of the future of our Organization. One is an approach that I do not hesitate to call elitist; the other is a democratic one.

Some Member States maintain that we should increase the number of permanent seats by two — a solution that has been dubbed "the quick fix". Even though this formula has apparently been abandoned by some of its initiators, others still seem to favour it. Reform of this type would not be evolution. Rather, it would be involution of the present system. The five current permanent members are all from the northern hemisphere, and almost all of them are fully industrialized, prosperous nations. Adding two more with the same profile, rather than correcting this imbalance, would clearly aggravate it.

A variation of this formula is the "2+3" proposal: two permanent seats for highly developed nations, and three permanent seats for the developing world — that is to say, one for Asia, one for Africa and one for Latin America.

Objections have been raised to this approach, for many reasons.

First, it would benefit only two or five Members of the United Nations, to the detriment of the remaining 175. The end result would be a small directorate of big countries, making critical decisions on questions that affect us all, but on which we would have no say. Furthermore, this formula would introduce the concept of elitism — of continental, hegemonic power — where it has so far been absent and where, I believe, it does not belong: in the world of non-aligned countries.

Secondly, this formula would double the number of Council members fully absolved from the need to stand for democratic election. And, to me, one thing is clear: if 10 members of the Security Council were never again — no more, for eternity — to have to pass the test of an election, the General Assembly's attempts at dialogue and interaction with such a Council would have almost nil results.

Thirdly, there are countries that contribute more to the United Nations budget than do some of the current permanent members. Others have larger populations or make more substantial contributions to United Nations activities. If they were shut out of permanent membership, they would inevitably compete for non-permanent seats much more frequently than they do now. This, in turn, would greatly diminish the election chances of other, medium-sized to small, countries in their respective geographic groups. Disharmony, resentment, even acrimony would prevail if the "quick fix" or the "2+3" formula were adopted.

Fourthly, since permanent members cannot be removed, except by their own agreement — a most unlikely occurrence — the new permanent members would, in principle, sit on the Council for eternity, impervious to changes in the world or in their own fortunes.

Fifthly, permanent members, as we all very well know, are assured a continuous presence in other important bodies of the United Nations system. If other permanent members were to be created, they would undoubtedly aspire to those same benefits, considering them an implicit and undeniable prerogative of their new status. This would risk creating a virtual monopoly of permanent members — old and new — over many bodies in the United Nations system, the so-called "cascade effect".

Last but not least, increasing the number of permanent members would double the number of vetoes

on the Security Council, and threaten to paralyse its activity. The veto, as has already been stated by the two previous speakers, is an institution whose time has come — during the cold war years — and gone. We should be focusing on how to limit its use, not on how to proliferate it.

The opposite vision of the future of our Organization is, instead, that of democracy, equitable geographical representation, and equitable rotation. We strongly believe that rotation is the key word for a truly democratic reform. Italy's proposal moves in this direction. Our project has undergone many changes since it was first presented at the beginning of last year. We have listened to criticism, and taken it into account.

What we are proposing is to leave the permanent members at five, and increase the Security Council by adding eight or 10 new non-permanent seats. According to this formula, the General Assembly would choose 24-30 countries to rotate in the additional non-permanent seats over a six-year period, with each country on the Council for two years and off for four years. Needless to say, those countries would be excluded from competing for the current non-permanent seats. The General Assembly should select those 24-30 countries on the basis of their contribution to the general aims of the Organization, particularly peace-keeping operations (troops, *matériel*, financing, humanitarian aid, etc.), and other criteria that could no doubt be identified by the General Assembly itself. But this group must not be fixed in perpetuity. Every 10-12 years there would be a review of the list, and those countries that had not honoured their greater responsibilities and commitments would be replaced by other members able and willing to meet them.

In our plan, the geographical distribution of the additional non-permanent seats should privilege the continents that are currently underrepresented. For example, if 10 new seats were added, five should go to Africa and Asia, two to the Latin American and Caribbean States, two to the Western European and Others Group, and one to Eastern Europe. In this way, 70 per cent of the additional non-permanent seats would be reserved for developing countries.

Critics of this formula have implied that it ultimately creates a third category of members. We do not believe that this is so. What we have in mind is not a third category but a system of rotation, as follows.

First, like all non-permanent members, the 24-30 countries would be subject to election by secret ballot — the very essence of democracy — and required to obtain a two-thirds majority.

Secondly, this would not be a closed rotation agreement, but an open one, which should be reviewed every 12-15 years. Nothing would prevent other interested countries from forming additional rotation agreements, some of which already exist — such as the one for Africa — although they are not always complied with.

Thirdly, it should be underlined that while more frequently rotating countries, if elected, would sit on the Security Council every six years, all others could, in theory, stand for election as often as every four years, in accordance with the present rules.

Finally, and most important of all, mid-sized and small States would have a concrete, realistic hope of being elected to the Council, since they would no longer have to compete for seats with their larger neighbours, who systematically elbow them out at every election. And those who have been here for a number of years know this only too well.

In fact, those who would benefit the most from our proposal would be the smaller and mid-sized States, 79 of which have been kept out of the Council so far, while 43 have served only once. In short, I believe we should work for reform that brings about the inclusion of all, and the exclusion of none.

One of the reasons most frequently cited for creating two new permanent members is that Germany and Japan represent the new reality of the past 30 years in the international community — the new global powers. With all due respect, I cannot share this view. These two global powers, along with others, have existed as global powers at least since the beginning of the century. The true new reality of the past 30 years is that 100 or so former colonies have become full-fledged sovereign countries. If they stand united, they are one of the main players at the United Nations.

> "Economic and social progress will not attain its full significance unless it is accompanied by an effort to democratize international life. In my view, democratization is an imperative, not only within States but also between States and in all the power centres of international society." (*SG/SM/5772*)

These are not my words, but those of Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali, from his address to the Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement in Cartagena last October. It is our sincere hope that this spirit, the spirit of democracy among nations, may also prevail in these halls, for the sake of the future of our Organization and of the international community as a whole.

Mr. Jemat (Brunei Darussalam): On behalf of my delegation, I would like to express our appreciation to the President, as well as to the two Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group, His Excellency Mr. Wilhelm Breitenstein and His Excellency Mr. Nitya Pibulsonggram, for the report (A/49/965) on this important subject, which we hope will take us a considerable step forward in seeing how the Security Council can be reformed and revitalized.

The authority and credibility of the Security Council, which, under the Charter, has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, have grown substantially in recent years. In this task, the Council must be strengthened and revitalized so that it can adapt to new realities. Majority views are now focused on the importance of ensuring that changes in the structure of this Organization should reflect the changes in the global political, economic and social landscape.

We therefore associate ourselves with the general support expressed by members of the Open-ended Working Group on the need to increase the membership of the Security Council and review its composition, particularly with regard to the addition of developing countries. While expanding membership to fill both permanent and non-permanent seats is important, we feel that the question of representation of interests, particularly for small countries and countries without regional representation, is even more important. My delegation would like to emphasize the importance of the composition of the Security Council reflecting clearly and equitably the geographical distribution and representation of United Nations membership. In this regard, we support the need for developing countries of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean to be represented both in permanent and in non-permanent seats of the Security Council.

Apart from the expansion of the Security Council's membership, serious consideration must also be given to the need to enhance the effectiveness of the Council's operations, particularly in its decision-making process. It is important for the Security Council to continue to maintain its transparency and openness in order to function efficiently and effectively. To this end, my delegation welcomes the briefings by the President of the Security Council to the non-members of the Council.

The Security Council has so far experienced both success and failure. In several cases, its resolutions have remained merely resolutions and failed to achieve their intended objectives. On others, imposed resolutions have tended to punish not only the guilty but also the innocent. For instance, the imposition of economic sanctions has had unintended victims, both in target countries and third countries. Adequate precautions must be taken in enforcing such resolutions, and a mechanism needs to be conceived to ensure that such actions punish the guilty but do not affect the lives of innocent civilians by depriving them of their basic needs.

Another concern of my delegation is the power of certain States to influence the decision of the majority when such decisions affect vital issues of international peace and security. My delegation is of the view that the current reform process should also address the need for a more balanced decision-making process that serves the interest of the majority.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate my delegation's support for the work of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council. We would also like to express our view that the reform of the Security Council should strengthen its effectiveness and its representative character, including equitable geographic representation for permanent and non-permanent members.

Mr. Catarino (Portugal): The question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council has been under consideration by the Open-ended Working Group since it was established by the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session. Much work has already been done in the Working Group over the last two years.

In fact, the working methods of the Security Council have improved considerably in the last two years, thanks largely to the Working Group's efforts for greater transparency in that organ *vis-à-vis* the general membership. Non-members of the Security Council are today far better informed with regard to the deliberations of the Council. They also have greater access to it and are able, directly or indirectly, through effective working machinery, of communicating their positions on matters of which the Council is seized.

However, now, in the fiftieth session, we are at a point where we must strive to move ahead significantly in the process of uniting our positions. We must all agree as soon as possible on what the Security Council should look like and how it should function in order to address most effectively the new challenges of international peace and security.

During both the general debate and the Special Commemorative Meeting, it was clear that many delegations concurred in recognizing the need to bring the Security Council into line with the new realities of international relations. Similarly, the report of the Open-ended Working Group states that

> "there was agreement to expand the Security Council and to review its working methods and other matters related to its functioning in a way that further strengthens its capacity and effectiveness, enhances its representative character and improves its working efficiency." *(A/49/47, para. 13)*

When the Open-ended Working Group reconvenes this coming January, the opportunity to strengthen the Security Council must not be lost. Many proposals have been forwarded, including a suggestion from Portugal. But the overriding importance of reaching an agreement on one comprehensive package for enhancing the effectiveness of the Council must be kept in mind. It will not be possible for every proposal to figure in the final package.

We must all, therefore, exhibit the necessary flexibility to meet each other on common ground, where the objective, surely shared by all, of an effective, representative and efficient Security Council can be reached. Bridges must be built and crossed so that the Working Group can pave the road towards a consensual solution agreeable to all. We believe that such a solution must benefit the membership as a whole, as well as each and every country, large or small.

At the end of this process of hard work, all Member States must feel that the enhanced Security Council is one that represents them, both individually and collectively, in carrying out the demanding but vital tasks required in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Londoño-Paredes (Colombia) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: Allow me to congratulate the President on his unanimous election to the presidency of the General Assembly. We are sure that under his leadership the Assembly will achieve its objectives.

It is an honour for me to speak on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries on the agenda item before us, the "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters", which was one of the crucial issues addressed at the Eleventh Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Cartagena last October. As a result of its deliberations, the Movement adopted common positions on the matter, which are included in the Final Document of the Cartagena Summit. The relevant paragraphs of that Document, in its draft form, stated the following:

> "The Heads of State or Government welcomed the ongoing endeavours aimed at reforming and improving certain structures and procedures of the United Nations as an essential component of strengthening multilateralism, with a view to ensuring equal participation, more balanced representation and better equilibrium, in keeping with the principles and objectives of the United Nations. In this context, they stressed the need to democratize the United Nations to better reflect the universal nature of the Organization and to fulfil the principle of sovereign equality of States. They underlined, in particular, the need for full democracy and transparency in the work of the Security Council, in view of its recent practices and performance. They expressed their determination to participate constructively in the process of revitalization and reform, in the firm conviction that the United Nations is an indispensable forum to be supported and strengthened. Yet democratization of the international political and economic institutions inherent in such a process continues to be hampered by those who seek to preserve their privileged position of power. In these endeavours, the main purpose should be to make the Organization more responsive to the changing realities and emerging challenges of peace and development in a dynamic context.
>
> "In view of the increasing trend on the part of some countries to exercise undue influence over the Security Council and the privileged and dominant role that the veto right ensures for the permanent members of the Council, which is contrary to the aim of democratizing the United Nations, they reiterated their position adopted at the Fifth, Sixth and Tenth Summits regarding the special privilege of permanent members of the Security Council to

exercise the veto and committed themselves to actively promote its curtailment, with a view to its elimination. Furthermore, while welcoming the actions taken by the Council with regard to its transparency and working methods, they considered them still insufficient and urged the General Assembly to recommend to the Council further measures to ensure its full democratization.

"They took note of the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, reflecting agreement to expand the Security Council and to review its working methods and other matters related to its functioning in order to strengthen its capacity and effectiveness and enhance its representative character. As important differences continue to exist, further in-depth consideration of these issues is required. They acknowledged that the non-aligned countries participated in the deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group and expressed their determination that the Movement pursue the work of the Open-ended Working Group in a concerted and active manner.

"They reaffirmed that both the reform and the expansion aspects of the Security Council should be considered as integral parts of a common package, taking into account the principle of sovereign equality of States and equitable geographic distribution, as well as the need for transparency, accountability and democratization in the working methods and procedures of the Security Council, including its decision-making processes. They noted positively the proposal submitted by the Non-Aligned Movement to the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform, encompassing the issues of membership, transparency and working methods of the Council. They emphasized that the proposal to expand the Council should be comprehensive in nature in order to improve its credibility and thus reflect the universal character of the world Organization. They considered it essential to substantially increase the proportion of members of the Council belonging to the Movement and to that end they urged that the non-aligned countries should work towards increasing the representation of developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean in the Security Council. Any attempt to exclude non-aligned countries from any expansion in the membership of the Security Council would be unacceptable to the Movement. They therefore agreed on the need for a coherent and coordinated approach by the members of the Movement.

"They stressed the importance of enhancing the effective functioning of the Security Council by adopting specific measures aimed at improving the working relationship of the Council with the General Assembly, other organs of the United Nations and non-members of the Security Council. They also underscored the need to operationalize Article 50 of the Charter, particularly by institutionalizing the consultations envisaged under this Article, as well as to adopt other effective measures to enable non-members to bring to the attention of the Council members their problems and difficulties, with a view to their solution.

"While recognizing the importance acquired by informal closed meetings of the members of the Council, they reaffirmed their conviction that those informal consultations must not replace the provisions enshrined in the Charter and the provisional rules of procedure of the Council, nor restrict the necessary transparency in its work.

"In order to meet the objective of a restructuring of the United Nations that would achieve democratization, transparency and efficiency of the Security Council as well as better balance of functions between the principal organs of the United Nations, the Heads of State or Government examined various mechanisms, including the possible convening of the General Conference for the revision of the Charter foreseen in Article 109 of the Charter of the United Nations at an appropriate time."

Finally, my delegation would like to reiterate, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, that we will continue to work in the Open-ended Working Group in a constructive, concerted and active manner.

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): I wish to thank the Chairman of the Working Group, Mr. Amara Essy, and the two Vice-Chairmen, Mr. Breitenstein of Finland and Mr. Pibulsonggram of Thailand, for their outstanding contributions to the work of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. I am confident that my colleagues join me in commending

them on a job well done in tackling the complex and highly sensitive tasks with which they have been entrusted.

I would also like to express my full confidence in the leadership of the new President of the General Assembly, Mr. Freitas do Amaral. There is no question in my mind that his wise guidance will significantly advance the debate on this issue of great importance during the Assembly's current session.

As we are all aware, a clear consensus exists among the Member States on the urgent need for reform of the structure and procedures of the Security Council. The broad participation in the Open-ended Working Group and the large number of delegations which touched upon this issue during both the general debate and the Special Commemorative Meeting this year attest to the high premium which Member States place on this issue.

We have now come to the end of another year of intensive discussions. This year's session of the Working Group has seen fruitful results, as we have been able thoroughly to assess the major issues, enrich the discussion further and, by so doing, identify some areas of convergence. Although consensus remains elusive on major issues, my delegation is encouraged that the Working Group is moving in the right direction.

This year's report, which was adopted in the Working Group and duly noted by the General Assembly on 18 September, illustrates that three broad categories of issues are currently under discussion in the Working Group. They are: first, how to restructure the Security Council to achieve better representation of the general membership; second, how and to what extent the Council can be democratized *vis-à-vis* its decision-making process, including the question of veto power; and lastly, how to improve the Council's working methods towards greater transparency.

The report also reveals that, despite wide gaps in the positions of delegations on most of the hard-core issues, there is some convergence of views. First, as the two Vice-Chairmen pointed out, there is clear agreement on the need to expand the Council to reflect increases in the membership of the United Nations to a total size within the range of the mid-to-low twenties. Secondly, although no delegation opposes an increase in the non-permanent membership of the Council, the question of increasing the permanent membership remains a point of controversy. Thirdly, with the exception of a few delegations, most Member States called for certain measures to restrict the exercise of veto power, including its scope of application. Finally, there was quasi-unanimity about the need to enhance the transparency of the working methods of the Council.

My delegation believes that the report and the compendium will facilitate our dialogue. As the papers contained in the compendium have provided valuable input in our past discussion, they should continue to serve as a basis for the future deliberations of the Working Group.

It is for this reason that the delegation of the Republic of Korea welcomes the decision of the General Assembly that the Working Group should continue its work during the fiftieth session and submit a further report before the end of the session.

At this time, my delegation would like to reiterate its basic position on the reform of the Security Council as follows.

First and foremost, we strongly believe that the final package of the reform should be based on consensus among Member States, in view of the profound impact that the package will have on the capacity of the Security Council and the United Nations as a whole in the decades ahead. Any decision that lacks the general support of the Member States will hamper the viability of the United Nations.

Secondly, we believe that better representation strengthens the political and moral authority of the Council. It ensures more effective implementation of its decisions. It flows from this that the key element of reform is to bolster the Council's legitimacy. One of the best ways to achieve this objective is to make the Council more representative of the general membership, enhance democracy in its decision-making, and improve the transparency of its procedures.

Thirdly, on the issue relating to the expansion of the Council, a formula must be found which allows better participation in the Security Council of medium and small-sized Member States, which constitute an absolute majority of the Member States in the United Nations.

My delegation has always believed that the expansion of the Security Council should incorporate the full range of interests and points of view, rather than be designed to accommodate the needs and privileges of some select groups of countries. For these reasons, the

enlargement and composition of the Council must reflect the universal character of the United Nations and must be guided by the principle of sovereign equality of States and equitable geographical distribution.

In this regard, some concepts advocating the creation of regional or semi-permanent membership have been introduced. In the past, my delegation has expressed its interest in the proposals based on these concepts. We remain interested in these proposals, in the belief that the creation of such a membership would be beneficial to both small and medium-sized countries.

Fourthly, another equally important aspect that we should focus on in the reform exercise relates to the decision-making procedures of the Council. We have always questioned the continuing relevance of the veto in the light of the changed realities of today's world.

The veto system is incompatible with the principles of democracy and sovereign equality. While it is true that the veto has rarely been used in recent times, there are no assurances that it will not be used again. Moreover, the international community is aware of many instances in which the threat to use the veto, or even the possession of that power, influenced the deliberations and decisions of the Council.

As it stands, however, none of the permanent members is willing to accept the abolition of the veto. Under the circumstances, we share the view of those delegations that advocate a realistic approach based upon pragmatism. In that regard, we are pleased that many proposals designed to limit the veto power in its scope and use have already been tabled, and we believe that the Working Group should discuss them in detail and identify the areas where we can take some positive steps.

Fifthly, my delegation strongly opposes the extension of the veto power beyond the five current permanent members. We have in the past repeatedly voiced our strong opposition to such proliferation. The veto is an anachronistic institution that should be discarded eventually — definitely not one that should be extended to other members of the Council.

Sixthly, any reform that results only in an enlargement of membership is not satisfactory to us. Our firm view is that a mere change in the size and composition of the Council — one that is not accompanied by some specific changes in its working methods — would not be sufficient.

In this regard, we are pleased that a broad consensus on the need for a more open and transparent Security Council appears to have emerged from the discussions in the Working Group, and that some limited but important initiatives have already been taken by the Council towards that end, as enumerated in the observations and assessment of the two Vice-Chairmen. However, we believe that much more can be done, even without waiting for the finalization of the reform package, given that in most cases an amendment to the Charter is not required. We urge the Council to respond further to the aspirations of the majority of the Member States to increased transparency in its working methods.

Finally, I should like to share some of my thoughts on how we might best proceed further in the discussion of the subject before us.

We believe that the Member States should strive hard to keep the momentum alive and further facilitate the process, so that a reform package acceptable to all Member States could emerge at an early stage.

In closing, I should like to reiterate the Republic of Korea's firm commitment to participate actively, with an open mind and a constructive spirit, in the deliberations of the Working Group and to fully cooperate with other delegations to achieve consensus.

Mr. Pawar (India): Allow me to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Diogo do Freitas Amaral on his election as President of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. My delegation has no doubt that the work of the Assembly will proceed smoothly and productively under his expert guidance.

At the recent Summit in Cartagena of the Non-Aligned Movement many important decisions were taken by its Heads of State and Government in regard to the expansion and reform of the Security Council, which will provide a beneficial input for the work of the Open-ended Working Group in the coming year. The statement of the Ambassador of Colombia in this regard, giving the details, has the full support of my delegation.

The report of the Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council has a wealth of documentation annexed to it. This compendium shows that in the past two years of extensive discussions we have witnessed a rich exchange of ideas and views that gives us a clear insight into the thinking of the Member

States. Notably, there are both areas of convergence and areas of differences on a number of questions related to the main issue. However, it is significant that a consensus exists for an expansion of the Security Council that would reflect the increase in the membership of the United Nations, especially of developing countries. This is necessary to ensure the Council's legitimacy and effectiveness.

My delegation supports the continuation of the work of the Working Group on the basis of this important consensus decision. We hope that the Group will attempt, in its further work, to narrow the differences that exist and to make sustained efforts to reach a consensus on unresolved issues.

In this context, I should like to quote here from the statement made by our Prime Minister before this Assembly on the occasion of the Special Commemorative Meeting to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

> "The United Nations today includes a much larger number of independent, sovereign States than when it began. In such a context, the United Nations cannot afford to be seen as either exclusivist or incomplete, either in appearance or in outlook. In particular, an adequate presence of developing countries is needed in the Security Council on the basis of objective criteria: nations of the world must feel that their stakes in global peace and prosperity are factored into United Nations decision-making". (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 40th meeting, p. 45*)

The existing imbalances in the membership of the Security Council arise from the exclusion from representation of an overwhelming segment of the world population: that residing in the developing countries. Any proposal that accentuates this imbalance obviously will not enjoy consensus. As has been made clear in the Cartagena Declaration of the Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, any attempt to exclude non-aligned countries from any expansion in membership of the Security Council, including permanent membership, would be unacceptable to the Movement.

We believe that the expansion of the membership of the Council in the category of permanent members should be decided upon on the basis of agreed criteria for selection. Once criteria are agreed upon, the decision on new permanent members should be made globally by the membership of the United Nations. We have, in the course of the deliberations of the Working Group, suggested certain criteria, such as population, contribution to the United Nations system, support and participation in peace-keeping, and potential for a regional and global role. Other criteria have been mentioned by other countries. We believe that it would be beneficial for the Group to analyse these suggestions and come up with an acceptable set of criteria against which the claims of each country could be assessed. On the basis of such criteria, some countries will clearly qualify for permanent membership. We believe that India will be among them.

As we have stated on several occasions, the expansion of the Council and its reform should be considered as integral parts of a common package, taking into account the need for transparency in the decision-making process. We welcome the Working Group's decision that the final agreement on cluster I and cluster II issues should comprise a comprehensive package.

Before concluding, I wish to assure the Assembly that India will continue to participate actively and in a constructive manner in the discussions within the Working Group in a constructive manner.

Mr. Eitel (Germany): For the third consecutive time, the General Assembly is discussing the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council. Last year, we spoke before the General Assembly and expressed our thanks to the Chairman of the informal Working Group and to both Vice-Chairmen for their outstanding work during the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

Today I shall take this opportunity to thank the Chairman of the informal Working Group during the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, Foreign Minister Essy, and the two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Breitenstein and Ambassador Pibulsonggram, for their excellent work. In particular, I would like to express my thanks to the two Vice-Chairmen for their accurate assessment of the progress achieved by the informal Working Group and for the proposals set forth in their report, which has been circulated as an official document.

We regret that Ambassador Pibulsonggram will be leaving. Let me use this opportunity to thank him again for his untiring efforts to guide and conduct the work of the Group. We hope that a successor can be found as soon as possible. Like the great majority of Member

States, we are opposed to further changes in the Bureau of the Working Group because this cannot but affect the work of all working groups. I am sure we all have the greatest interest in progress being made in the Working Group on an Agenda for Development as well as in the High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations.

I see our task of restructuring the Security Council as comparable to the renovation of a huge house whose roof has suffered damage from storms. Therefore, the attic and roof must be rebuilt and strengthened to once again be able to cope with bad weather to come. During the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly we answered the questions of why we thought it necessary to rebuild the attic and what kind of reconstruction we had in mind. During the last session — the forty-ninth session — of the General Assembly, we consulted several architects and weighed the pros and cons of their proposals. Now, during the fiftieth session, the anniversary session of the General Assembly, we have to take the third step and select the proposal which is the most adequate and suitable. This decision will not be an easy one. But I am convinced that we will be successful. I am optimistic for three reasons.

First, we have no time to lose. We will not be able to meet the challenges facing our Organization unless the United Nations house has a repaired and stable roof and attic. Any damage to the roof affects the house as a whole. Those who have carefully followed the general debate of this session of the General Assembly and the statements made during the fiftieth-anniversary celebration know that there continues to be consensus about the urgent need to reform.

Secondly, we know what we are aiming at in rebuilding the attic. We want an attic which is easily accessible and which has many means of access to the other floors. In other words, the Member States should have the opportunity to be represented on the Council more frequently. We want the attic to be large in all four directions. This also applies to those who live on this floor. No one shall be excluded. In other words, all world regions should be equitably represented on the Council. In particular, the regions of Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean States need stronger representation. We do not favour an undemocratic architectural plan for the enlargement of the Council which excludes States or groups of States from the outset.

We want to ensure the upkeep of the attic. The attic of a house suffers particularly from strong weather and storms. It needs experienced inhabitants who have reliable equipment and special tools to maintain it. In other words, countries that are able and willing to contribute on a global scale to the maintenance of peace and security and that have already taken on large responsibilities regarding international development and United Nations activities should be permanently represented on the Council. We, and with us a large number of other Member States, believe that Germany is one of these countries. The attic should not be closed off or have an impervious concrete floor. I have spoken already of the need for many means of access. It must be bright and have skylights. In other words, the Council's work must be carried out in an open and transparent manner to enable non-members to receive all the information they require. Some progress has already been achieved in this context. During the German presidency of the Council we tried to live up to this task. Nevertheless, much still needs to be done.

There is no space left in the house for additional floors, special ante-rooms or special entries. We are not aiming at a completely new architecture with new classes of inhabitants. We prefer a thorough renovation of the house that we know and cherish. In other words, models of rotation, which received the support during the recent general debate of less than 3 per cent of Member States, are no alternative or, at best, a bad one and would create more problems than they could solve.

Thirdly, we have now a more than sufficient number of recommendations, opinions and reports on the rebuilding. On the part of the United Nations there are the report of the informal Working Group and the observations and the assessment by the Vice-Chairmen of the progress of its work. I congratulate the Vice-Chairmen on their judicious observations regarding the important progress made. I associate myself fully with their suggestions and their belief that Member States must aim at substantial achievements during the current, fiftieth, session of the General Assembly.

Two other important United Nations documents, both issued on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, lend momentum to the reform of the Council: The Declaration of the Member States and Observers of 24 October 1995, representing the peoples of the world, and the statement of the Security Council adopted at its meeting at ministerial level under the Italian presidency on 26 September 1995. Both documents call for the reform of the Council.

From the Member States themselves we have the statements made during the recent general debate and the anniversary meeting. The statements show a clear tendency in favour of enlarging the Council. The parliamentarians of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) at the special session of the Inter-Parliamentary Council in New York marking the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, adopted a declaration entitled "A Parliamentary Vision for International Cooperation into the Twenty-First Century". This declaration calls for a reform of the Security Council to make it more representative while at the same time maintaining its authority and effectiveness.

Some important and well-recognized groups of States have issued joint statements. I would like to mention, among others, the non-aligned countries at their recent Summit, the Nordic States and the informal group of small and medium-sized countries. In a solemn declaration on the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Charter of the United Nations, the European Council, at its summit meeting in Cannes last June, unanimously called on the United Nations and its Member States to pursue and develop the reform programme under way and to make further progress in adapting United Nations structures and institutions, including the Security Council, to present circumstances.

Finally, several comprehensive studies on reform questions have been published by independent experts this year. As one example of many I may mention the Qureshi-von Weizsäcker report, which deals explicitly with reform of the Council. We must make good use of the momentum created. It will not last forever. Let us take advantage of the window of opportunity that is now open.

We agree with the observation, made by the Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group and by numerous other States, that the time has come to move on to the next phase of the work — that is, to a process of actual negotiations aimed at achieving a single, comprehensive agreement. The decisive question that we shall have to answer is this: will the future composition of the Council benefit the Organization and the international community of States? So far as my country and its readiness to serve the United Nations as a permanent member of the Security Council are concerned, I am not afraid of the answer to this question. The United Nations can count on Germany.

The Acting President: We shall continue our consideration of item 47 this afternoon, starting at 3 o'clock. As was announced earlier, some 70 delegations are listed to take part in the debate on this item. As we have heard only nine at this meeting, I again appeal for brevity. Delegations are requested to ensure, if at all possible, that statements do not exceed 10 minutes.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

United Nations A/50/PV.57

General Assembly
Fiftieth Session

Official Records

57th plenary meeting
Monday, 13 November 1995, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . . (Portugal)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Pibulsonggram (Thailand), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 47 (*continued*)

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

The Acting President: I should like to inform the Assembly that the representatives of Burundi and Namibia have requested to participate in the debate on this item.

Inasmuch as the list of speakers was closed today at noon, may I ask the Assembly whether there is any objection to the inclusion of Burundi and Namibia in the list of speakers?

There is no objection. Burundi and Namibia are therefore included in the list of speakers.

Mr. Cárdenas (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Almost two years have gone by since resolution 48/26 established the Open-ended Working Group to consider all aspects of the functioning of the Security Council. That Group, presided over by the President of the General Assembly and wisely guided by Ambassadors Wilhelm Breitenstein of Finland and Nitya Pibulsonggram of Thailand, has worked intensively this year.

We are especially grateful for the distribution to the General Assembly of the compendium of documents and observations of the Vice-Chairmen. The documents, referred to as clusters I and II, served as a well-ordered basis for channelling our recent discussions and for giving structure to the Working Group's final report.

The Argentine delegation, which participated actively in the meetings held this year, submitted to the Working Group an "evolving" document intended to stimulate consideration of the item; at the suggestion of a number of delegations it was annexed to the compendium contained in document A/49/965. Our presentation related to what was graphically called the "cascade effect" of the status of permanent membership of the Security Council. The single, modest, intention of our document was to sound a warning concerning the profound collateral effects on the entire United Nations system of the possible expansion of the number of permanent members. Owing to its importance, this matter is worth pondering.

We believe that an expansion of the permanent membership should not merely install new chairs in the Security Council Chamber, but should go much further. The document draws attention to the many other related decisions to which we must also give much thought. One of the most important of these is without question expansion of the membership of the International Court of Justice. Each of the permanent members of the Security Council has to date always had a member on the Hague Court, even though there is no provision to that effect in the Statue of the Court.

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This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

Reform of the Security Council, the paramount organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, does not have institutional implications only; it also poses a broad challenge that must be addressed with much care and wisdom, without haste and with great caution. The question is too important for us to take decisions lightly and run the risk of error.

As my Foreign Minister recently told the General Assembly, the basic element of the reform is the need to safeguard and improve the efficiency and flexibility of the work of the Security Council. Given the necessary consensus, any expansion of the Security Council must be very cautious, restrained and limited. In our view, such an expansion could be based on a new, imaginative mechanism aimed at achieving greater representativity, which through rotation formulas would make possible more frequent inclusion on the Council of countries with the greatest desire to serve the maintenance of international peace and security, without — and I lay particular emphasis on this — resulting in arbitrary exclusions and the concomitant establishment of new privileges that would further undermine equity.

In that connection we have heard this year a number of innovative proposals that through rotation would ensure a more frequent presence in the Council of a larger number of States. Such a scheme would also permit easier access to the Council by countries that must now wait many long years before they can aspire to a seat on the Security Council.

In our view it is vital to take account of the differences between the situation in 1945, which led to the existence of permanent seats on the Security Council, and the current international situation. In today's far more transparent, open and democratic world, we must favour solutions that are — and I stress this — less rigid and less authoritarian in order to adapt the Security Council to our times.

We must be particularly careful when we speak of the notion of regional representation, which is strictly speaking alien to the Charter of the United Nations. Future generations could question the capricious criterion of regionally based representativity, which some in this Organization have recently set forth with respect to reform of the Security Council. Each geographical region has its own characteristics and idiosyncrasies. We therefore believe that it could be arbitrary to try to establish a single and universal set of new parameters for representation, to be applicable to all continents.

We must ask the question of whether we still possess the momentum we thought existed to motivate in-depth reform of the Security Council. In the judgement of my delegation, the specific matter of expansion of the permanent membership does not seem to enjoy the minimum consensus necessary to put it into practice. That momentum will exist, or will return, when, after calm and careful thought we begin to consider conclusions and debate the options for an equitable solution of the question before us. We must not be obsessed with the idea of the "propitious moment", or the "challenge imposed upon us" by the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. There must be no artificial deadlines: reform of the Security Council is too important and too complicated, and has consequences that are too serious for the international community.

We must recognize, on the other hand, that there has lately been considerable progress in the transparency and openness of the work of the Council. The current predictable and well-organized meetings between Council members and troop-contributing countries surely constitute a most significant area of progress in the sphere of peace-keeping operations. Yet this procedure, originally proposed by New Zealand and Argentina, should be subject to ongoing review, as we believe it could be improved. Specifically, we think that the format of this mechanism should be formalized in deference to the responsibility of troop contributors to their own societies, including their Governments and their parliaments.

With respect to transparency, there is great room for improvement in the procedures of the Security Council. Last year, the French delegation proposed more frequent formal meetings, an idea noted by the Council through a presidential statement. And during Argentina's presidency, in January, 10 months ago, the Council considered the paper of the Secretary-General on a Supplement to "An Agenda for Peace" in a formal meeting, before discussing it in informal meetings. Yet we have not repeated that very rich experience.

During its presidency Argentina also held, for the first time, daily briefings for delegations not members of the Security Council on the work of the Council, including reports on what had taken place in informal consultations.

All of this reflects the importance that the Argentine Republic attaches to transparency and openness in the work of the Security Council. It also indicates the role

that non-permanent members of the Council can play in promoting change that will strengthen the legitimacy and representativity of the Security Council *vis-à-vis* the other members of the United Nations.

Mr. Owada (Japan): The fiftieth anniversary of the creation of the United Nations, coming as it did in the midst of the structural changes that are taking place in the world in the wake of the end of the cold war, has offered us a golden opportunity for sober reflection upon the role of the United Nations in the contemporary international system. The need to strengthen the Organization and to improve its functioning as the centre of action for the peace and stability of the world is keenly felt by a great number of the States that constitute the United Nations.

One focal point of our attention in this regard, needless to say, is the problem of how to enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of the Security Council as the principal United Nations organ responsible for the maintenance of peace and security. Thus, in their statements at the recent Special Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, as well as in the Assembly's general debate at the present session, an overwhelming majority of Member States referred to the need to reform the Security Council.

Those statements were testimony to our enormous expectations with respect to the role to be played by the United Nations in the new world that is now emerging. It is essential that we seize the momentum that has thus been generated, so that we may make tangible progress towards genuine reform during this session of the General Assembly.

Japan has enunciated its basic position on Security Council reform in various forums of this Organization, in particular in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. In Japan's view, the primary objective of our exercise should be to strengthen the functioning of the Council by enhancing its legitimacy and effectiveness. In order to attain this objective, the reform package should include the following elements: first, in order to ensure the effectiveness of the Council, it seems essential that a limited increase in its permanent membership should be implemented by the inclusion of countries which have both the capacity and the willingness to assume global responsibilities for world peace and stability.

On this score, many Member States have expressed their support for the addition of specific countries, including my own, as permanent members. In addition, the expanded permanent membership might also include those countries from the developing regions of the world which meet the qualifications I have mentioned, if Member States generally can agree on their selection.

Secondly, in view of the dramatically expanded membership of the United Nations as a whole, it is necessary to enhance the representativeness of the Security Council by adding an appropriate number of non-permanent seats. At the same time, my delegation believes that in carrying out this task a balance between the need for enhanced legitimacy and the need for increased effectiveness must be struck. In the light of this consideration, the total membership of an expanded Security Council, which should include an increase in both permanent and non-permanent seats, would have to be kept in the low twenties.

Thirdly, in considering the expansion of the Security Council, the geographical imbalance that exists now in the membership of the Council as a whole should be redressed, with particular attention given to the representation of Asia, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean.

In this connection, my country has stated on a number of occasions that Japan, with the endorsement of many countries, is prepared to discharge its responsibilities as a permanent member of the Security Council in accordance with its basic philosophy regarding international contributions, including the non-resort to the use of force prohibited by its Constitution.

Finally, it goes without saying that the reform should also address the problem of how to improve the Council's working methods, including enhancement of the transparency of its work. Much progress towards improvement is already under way on this score, but the final outcome should be integrated in the form of a single comprehensive package which would cover both of the two aspects of the reform, namely the expansion of the Council and the improvement of its working methods.

At the Special Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, the Prime Minister of Japan, Tomiichi Murayama, emphasized that on this issue of the reform of the Security Council it is now time for action. Japan believes that Member States should now

proceed to work expeditiously to reach agreement on a broad framework of reform by the end of the current session of the General Assembly in September 1996.

As we proceed in the weeks and months ahead on this path of seeking agreement on the specific modalities of the reform of the Security Council, it is the considered view of my delegation that we should keep two dimensions of our work in mind.

The first dimension relates to the nature of the exercise in the Working Group at this juncture in its work. In the course of our discussion so far we have already covered a lot of ground. General agreement seems to have been achieved on the need to expand the membership of the Council as well as to further improve its working methods. Furthermore, a number of concrete proposals and suggestions have been put on the table. Different ideas have been floated on ways to overcome conflicting interests and practical difficulties that stand in the way of finding an acceptable formula on a number of issues. Building on that progress, my delegation is convinced that it is high time we intensified our efforts to reach agreement on a concrete formula for expanding the Security Council membership by entering into the negotiating stage for arriving at an overall package. It is important to avoid the repetition of our past discussions. While trying to promote a convergence of views, we should now proceed to negotiate a concrete reform package.

The second dimension of our task relates to the problem of what working method should be employed in the Open-Ended Working Group. I should like to suggest that the Working Group pursue its activities in a more efficient manner. For example, one avenue to explore in this respect would be the possibility of holding informal consultations more frequently, while maintaining the transparency of the Working Group's work. Again, and still with a view to facilitating agreement, it might be useful to consider the institution of a series of intensive negotiating sessions in which the participation of high-level representatives from the various capitals could inject an element of each country's political judgement at the highest level. With a view to exploring various new and innovative ideas to expedite the process in which we have been engaged for the past two years, the Bureau should commence in the course of this session a process of informal consultations to identify the most effective ways to take our work a step further and bring us to a new level of genuine negotiations while building on our past achievements.

Clearly, the reform of the Security Council is one of the most urgent tasks we must achieve if we are seriously determined to strengthen the United Nations. Should Member States fail to reach concrete agreement on this all-important task in the near future the credibility of the Organization would be severely undermined. My delegation feels very strongly that each and every Member State should recognize our collective responsibility to sustain and reinforce the Organization, which is so indispensable for the maintenance of peace and stability in the present-day world. To meet this collective responsibility we all must redouble our efforts to realize a genuine reform, with commitment and in partnership. The future of the United Nations depends on our efforts.

Ms. Menon (Singapore): Allow me to begin by thanking His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, the President of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, for his guidance during that session as Chairman of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council. I should like to assure the President of the present session of our full cooperation as he now assumes this role.

We congratulate Ambassador Wilhelm Breitenstein of Finland and Ambassador Nitya Pibulsonggram of Thailand on their sterling work as Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group. In particular, we thank them for guiding us in the preparation of the Working Group's report contained in document A/49/47 and of its compendium contained in document A/49/965. Those documents have accurately captured the richness and range of our exchanges. They form useful references to the views of Member States and to the variety of concrete proposals that have been advanced.

As the Working Group begins its third year of work it is appropriate to take stock of our progress and see how we proceed from here. The pace of work in the Working Group has occasioned some comment, not all favourable. But, in my delegation's view, the process of the last two years has been both necessary and fruitful.

First, the Working Group process has clarified many of the complex and interlinked issues. Secondly, specific proposals on how to reform the Security Council have emerged and are now on the table for further discussion. Thirdly, the positions of many Member States have risen closer to the surface and are now more defined. Fourthly,

in my delegation's statement on this item last year we urged that there must be political will and that priority must be given to this issue in capitals in order to push ahead. If the statements at the Special Commemorative Meeting last month are any guide, the attention of our leaders and capitals has been engaged. At least, we hope so.

In other words, the exercise has shifted away from generalities and is entering a substantive stage of negotiations. The next stage in the work of the Working Group is therefore both crucial and delicate.

It is clearly important to maintain and enhance our forward momentum to build on the progress we have forged. At the same time, precisely because we are now focused on specific and substantive issues and national positions are engaged, it is essential to proceed with some deliberation. A misstep at this stage could cripple the process.

How do we take account of the different sensitivities without paralysing the discussion? We must recognize the political reality of differing opinions while preserving the climate of dialogue and cooperation that we have so far enjoyed, and move forward. We need political vision, coupled with circumspection, finesse and sensitivity. This will not be easy, but it is not impossible. To achieve it, we must first acknowledge the challenge.

This is why my delegation has consistently advocated a criteria-based approach to Security Council reform. We have suggested some criteria, which have been incorporated into the compendium in document A/49/965. The specific criteria that we have suggested are obviously neither definitive nor exhaustive. Like everything else, they are open for discussion. The more important point my delegation wishes to emphasize is methodological. We believe that a criteria-based approach is the most politically neutral means of advancing this important issue.

Whatever the approach adopted, my delegation pledges to do its best to support the Working Group actively. We intend to remain engaged in and to contribute constructively to the Working Group and the others. Security Council reform is an important and integral component of the entire package of forward-looking reforms needed to strengthen the United Nations and to prepare it for the challenges of the next century.

Mr. Tello (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly has been meeting for two years. Some may find the progress achieved slow, but the complexity and importance of its mandate justify its being so.

As is natural and logical, areas of agreement and of disagreement have taken shape throughout the debates. There appears to be general support for an increase in the membership of the Security Council. The conclusions of the most recent report of the Working Group also contained a set of principles and concepts that should provide the *raison d'être* and objective of the reform.

In addition to the principles of sovereign equality, equitable geograp..ical distribution and contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other objectives of the Organization, the report reflects the widespread desire for greater transparency, legitimacy, effectiveness, efficiency and democracy in the Security Council.

What should be the appropriate number of additional members? Which of the categories could be expanded? The Working Group still has no common response to these questions. How will the principles and concepts we have been discussing so far be defined? What is the appropriate combination of criteria for attaining the shared objectives we are pursuing? What, in short, are the ways to and conditions for a viable reform that will be acceptable to all?

All Member States have benefited from the debate in the Working Group. We have all learned something. We have adjusted our original views of the problems and changed our approaches, but we have also reaffirmed our convictions on various aspects of the reform.

Mexico remains profoundly convinced that it is imperative not to repeat the mistakes of 1945. We have been told, as the report states, that important changes are taking place in international relations. The list of these changes could be endless; some of them relate to the issue now before us, while others do not. For us, the question is whether it can be claimed that the circumstances that made it possible in San Francisco for five countries to have a privileged position in our Organization exist today. Interdependence, globalization and shared responsibility are concepts that lead us directly to the answer that they do not.

Can we claim that the principle of sovereign equality will be strengthened by granting privileges and prerogatives to other countries? We do not understand

how, by introducing new inequalities, we are going to make fully applicable this essential principle of relations between States, which, moreover, we solemnly reaffirmed on 24 October last.

By introducing new discriminatory elements will we be able to improve the representativeness and legitimacy of the Council's actions? Yes, more members are needed, but without new imbalances. Legitimacy will be fully achieved through decisions that are faithful to the principles of the Charter and the norms of international law. Thus will the moral authority and credibility of the Council take firm root.

It has been said that five new permanent members could be added to the Security Council. Explicitly or implicitly, this is the figure most often mentioned. According to these proposals, of the 10 permanent members that the Security Council would eventually have, 4 would come from the Group of Western European and Other States, 3 from Asia, 1 from Eastern Europe, 1 from Africa and 1 from Latin America and the Caribbean. Can anyone claim that this distribution genuinely reflects the objective of equitable geographical representation?

Moreover, if it is a question of geographical representation, can we contemplate representation that does not correspond to the will and enjoy the consent of the geographical region that is supposed to be represented? In any event, the regional groups will have to play an essential role in decisions of this kind.

In a Security Council with new permanent members, each enjoying privileges and prerogatives, can anyone say with certainty that the process of consultation, coordination and decision-making will be more effective and more efficient? How will this contribute to transparency?

With regard to the veto, can we unhesitatingly assert that by inalterably maintaining this privilege and, moreover, by extending it to other States we are making progress towards the democratization of the United Nations? Since 1945, Mexico has maintained that the veto is an anti-democratic institution. It should not be forgotten that in San Francisco there was no general agreement in this regard. Paragraph 3 of Article 27 of the Charter was adopted by a vote of 30 in favour and 2 against, with 15 abstentions. None of us is unaware that this provision was put forward as a *sine qua non* condition for the establishment of our Organization in circumstances that, as I have already said, no longer exist.

Just as in 1945, 50 years later there is still no agreement — witness the countless proposals put forward aimed at limiting the veto. We ourselves have said that it should be confined to issues under Chapter VII of the Charter and that two negative votes by permanent members should be required to block a decision. Those measures would indeed move us towards greater democracy in the United Nations.

In the draft resolution recommended by the Working Group, we have agreed to work towards general agreement. Moreover, from the legal standpoint, we must draw up a blueprint for reform that enjoys the support of two thirds of the members of the General Assembly — 124 States — and that, in addition, is ratified, in accordance with their respective constitutional processes, by two thirds of the Member States, including all the permanent members of the Security Council. Does the reality of Article 108 not compel us to be objective and realistic?

Mr. Reyn (Belgium), Vice-President, took the Chair.

All these considerations have guided Mexico's participation in the discussions on this subject, and on this basis the Government of Mexico submitted in April 1995 a proposal for increasing the number of members of the Security Council. The main elements of that proposal are the following: first, the membership of the Security Council would increase from 15 to 20 countries; secondly, there would be no increase in the number of permanent members, because, in our view, the five stipulated in the San Francisco Charter are more than enough; thirdly, two Member States would alternate, every two years, in occupying a non-permanent seat, in recognition of the role they play in the Organization; fourthly, there would be one additional seat for Africa, one for Asia and one for Latin America and the Caribbean, while another seat would be rotated every two years between Eastern and Western European countries; and, fifthly, the competence of the regional groups in considering and deciding on the allocation of the seats assigned to their respective regions would be strengthened.

That is the essence of our proposal. We are convinced that it is realistic, objective and, above all, viable.

As for the future, Mexico supports the Working Group's decision to continue its work. On the basis of the ideas we have expressed, we are aware that imposing

solutions is not the answer. Work will have to continue and efforts will have to be redoubled to make progress towards a convergence and unanimity of views. Mexico is convinced that with tenacity and patience, not haste, we will move ahead in shaping the reform of the organ on which we, the Member States, have conferred the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Fowler (Canada) (*interpretation from French*): I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for assuming, as did his predecessor, the chairmanship of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council. The two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group who are assisting him in that task — you, Mr. Acting President, whose forthcoming departure we shall regret, and, of course, Ambassador Breitenstein of Finland — accomplished remarkable work during the forty-ninth session, for which we are grateful.

The Working Group did considerable work during the forty-ninth session. The publication of a compendium report including, *inter alia*, the personal observations and assessment of the Vice-Chairmen, as well as various documents presented by Member States, will stimulate our thinking and help us focus our work.

As we have stated in the past, Canada attaches great importance to the effectiveness, credibility and legitimacy of the Council. Some of the questions in this regard fall under the heading of "other matters related to the Security Council", as contained in cluster II of the Working Group's agenda. These questions are fundamental for the Council to be able to fulfil its Charter mandate for the maintenance of international peace and security, and progress in this field should not be dependent upon the rest of the work done in the Working Group.

We are pleased with the advances achieved by the Council in increasing the transparency of its work, as well as its consultations with non-members of the Council, especially with troop-contributing countries. We strongly encourage the Council to pursue this path, and we again urge that the various measures adopted by the Council in recent months, notably with regard to consultations with troop-contributing countries, be institutionalized.

(spoke in English)

In this connection, the report of the Government of Canada on a rapid-reaction capability for the United Nations, presented to the General Assembly last September, contains concrete recommendations, some of which deserve discussion in the Working Group. Member States will be more disposed to furnish troops to the United Nations when they are in a position to participate in the discussions on the definition, implementation and renewal of mandates, as well as on the political direction of operations at critical moments in their existence.

We are alluding in particular to the creation of a troop-contributors committee for each operation, which could be set up when contributors are approached on the question of participation, even before the formal approval of an operation by the Council, in order to ensure a rapid United Nations reaction. This idea is in fact mentioned in paragraph 25 of the Vice-Chairmen's document. The Security Council would thus have the assurance that potential troop contributors took a favourable view of the proposed operation.

Before concluding my remarks on this theme, I would like to add an observation on the effectiveness and credibility of the Council, which have, unfortunately, been eroded by the Council's difficulties in the implementation of certain decisions. We believe the Council, and especially its permanent members, needs to pay closer attention to the nature and scope of its decisions and to the material and financial resources and political support provided to the United Nations. This would go a long way towards restoring the credibility which is essential to the Council's effective fulfilment of its important responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Permit me now to turn to the question of enlargement of the Council.

After two years of discussions, important differences continue to exist on key issues, as the Working Group's report correctly indicates. Paramount among these issues is the addition of new permanent members. From a careful reading the of Vice-Chairmen's document, this seems to have become more, rather than less, problematic, however desirable it may be to respond to several countries' understandable aspirations to such a status. It seems difficult not to conclude that the addition of new permanent members faces significant hurdles in the short run, and even more so when the Working

Group has examined only in preliminary fashion the thorny question of extending the power of veto to possible new permanent members.

Nevertheless, since the Group began its work, Canada has indicated that it is open to examining all proposals regarding enlargement, whether for new members, new categories or, indeed, the composition of regional groups. A year ago in the debate on this subject, my predecessor remarked,

> "We think that the concept of semi-permanent seats, to be shared for two-year periods by two or more countries, is particularly interesting and warrants further exploration. The creation of such a category would have the double advantage of allowing countries that more fully meet the requirements of Article 23 of the Charter to sit more frequently on the Council and of lessening the number of candidates for non-permanent member status." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Plenary Meetings, 30th meeting, p. 19)*

This idea may not respond fully to all concerns, but we believe it continues to merit further exploration as part of our search for a solution likely to attract widespread support.

During his statement in the general debate this year, our Foreign Minister, the Honourable André Ouellet, stated that it would be useful to initiate a fuller reflection on what constitutes a contribution by Member States to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the Organization, as set out in Article 23. Several Member States have given some idea of what they have in mind. For our part, Canada considers that respect for the Charter, participation in peace-keeping operations, payment in full, on time and without any conditions of regular and peace-keeping budget assessments, the commitment of States to arms control and disarmament, recourse to the peaceful settlement of disputes, humanitarian assistance, economic and social development assistance, respect for human rights, and promotion of civil society, must be among the key determining considerations in this regard. As Minister Ouellet said, an understanding among Member States along these lines would help in the selection of non-permanent members, whether on the existing basis or on a modified basis. We look forward to hearing views from many others on these aspects when discussions resume in the Working Group.

Secondly, as the Charter indicates, account should also be taken of equitable geographic distribution.

I wish to assure the President and all other participants of Canada's full and active cooperation once the work of the Group begins in January.

Mr. Yáñez-Barnuevo (Spain) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: First of all, I should like to express my delegation's gratitude to the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, Ambassador Wilhelm Breitenstein of Finland and Ambassador Nitya Pibulsonggram of Thailand, for their steadfast efforts in presiding jointly over the work of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council.

During the past year, the Working Group has covered considerable ground. It held a large number of meetings, and its intensive work produced a large number of contributions and proposals from Member States. One cannot but welcome the submission for the first time of a wide-ranging and substantive report from the Working Group, together with a compendium of the documents used and the views and proposals submitted. The Working Group now has solid and varied documentation enabling it to continue its work during the current session, a session that marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization. The publication of the report also means that academicians and the public now have documentation enabling them to keep abreast of this important question and to offer their ideas, thereby enriching the debate on expanding the Security Council.

It is clear, in the light of the documentation contained in the report, that the Working Group has made greater progress on the issues of cluster II, which is to say on matters not related to the expansion of the Security Council, such as transparency in the work of the Council and improvements in its methods of work. In connection with transparency and effectiveness, it must be noted that since 1993, on the initiative of the members of the Security Council themselves, some progress has been made in making it easier for all States Members of the Organization to follow the work of the Council and, as appropriate, its consultations, through practical arrangements that should be continually improved and brought up to date. Since the gradual implementation of these arrangements concerning transparency in the work of the Council, they have proved useful and beneficial, both for members of the Council and for the other States Members of the Organization. My delegation therefore

believes that progress can and should continue to be made on cluster II questions independently of developments in connection with cluster I.

However, the same cannot be said with regard to cluster I, whose main subject is the increase in the membership of the Security Council. Despite the great wealth of ideas, suggestions and even concrete formulas submitted in the past year, it must be admitted that profound differences persist between members of the Working Group. This should not be a source of discouragement; on the contrary, it should stir the Group to redouble its efforts to continue moving ahead in the search for a consensus solution acceptable to all Members of the United Nations. On a subject that is so vitally important for the future of the Organization, the search for consensus is essential.

There is consensus on the principle of expanding the Council, but not on its total membership or its composition. Spain favours a moderate increase in the number of members of the Council to a total of 21 to 25 members. This would make it possible to improve the representativeness of the Council by making it more balanced and democratic, while at the same time maintaining a composition consistent with the requirements of efficiency and speed in deliberation and decision-making.

Spain believes the increase should incorporate a system providing for a more frequent presence in the Council of States with weight and influence in international relations and with the ability and desire to make a significant contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the United Nations, in accordance with Article 23 of the Charter. In this connection, special reference should be made, *inter alia*, to Member States' contributions of troops and other personnel to peace-keeping operations.

This would not mean creating a new category of members of the Security Council, since the States enjoying a more frequent presence would periodically be subject to election by the General Assembly, as are the other non-permanent members of the Council, so that the democratic legitimacy of such members of the Council would always be duly guaranteed.

Any expansion of the Security Council will inevitably mean a change in the majority required for decision-making. On the basis of the provisions of Article 27 of the Charter, a distinction in this respect could be drawn between three types of decisions: first, decisions on procedural matters; secondly, decisions relating to substantive issues outside the framework of Chapter VII of the Charter, which are essentially questions relating to the peaceful settlement of disputes; and, finally, decisions within the framework of Chapter VII, which entail recourse to coercive measures.

Decisions in each of these categories would require a different majority: the more important the decision to be taken, the greater the required majority. Thus, the so-called right of veto of the permanent members would be applicable only in the third category of decisions, those adopted within the framework of Chapter VII of the Charter.

My delegation believes that the Working Group should continue its deliberations during this fiftieth session and, on the basis of the report, the annexed compendium and the views expressed during this debate in the General Assembly, begin its substantive work at the beginning of 1996.

I wish to offer assurances once again that the Spanish delegation will continue to participate actively in the work of the Working Group and will provide the Chairman with the necessary cooperation so that we can advance towards a consensus in our efforts to reach conclusions that are generally acceptable to Member States.

Ms. Wilmshurst (United Kingdom): We have been discussing the issue of Security Council enlargement in the Open-ended Working Group for two years now. The positions of delegations are well known. The United Kingdom delegation has set out its position in some detail in the Open-ended Working Group. Suffice it for me to say today that we believe that the Council should be enlarged and that this enlargement should be carried out in a way that enhances its effectiveness. On the issue of additional permanent members, it is our very strongly held view, as the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary both made clear earlier in this session, that there are certain countries which, by virtue of their global interests and their contribution to international peace, should be invited to accept the rights and responsibilities of permanent membership. We therefore support German and Japanese permanent membership, for which we believe the case is entirely convincing. We are also strongly of the view that there need to be additional seats for Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean

in an enlarged Council. We remain open-minded as to the nature of those additional seats.

As for the cluster II issues of transparency and other matters related to the Security Council, we welcome and have encouraged the steps taken by the Security Council to improve its working methods over the last year — in particular the inauguration of regular briefings by the Presidency of non-members on the work of the Council, the greater openness in the work of the Sanctions Committees and the consolidation of a stronger process of consultation with troop contributors. Some of those steps are derived from ideas raised in the Working Group as well as in the General Assembly more widely. That process of organic evolutionary change should continue. So too, for the moment, should consideration of those issues in the Open-ended Working Group.

The Open-ended Working Group made some useful progress during the course of the forty-ninth session and for that we pay tribute to the President of that session, the Foreign Minister of Côte d'Ivoire, and to the great industry and perseverance of the representatives of Thailand and Finland, the Co-Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group. Their observations and assessment were particularly useful and should provide an important guide for our work in the Open-ended Working Group when it resumes, which we hope it will do very soon.

The issues are now clear. The discussion on the enlargement of the Security Council has gone on for a long time. We need to make a real effort at this session, under the guidance of the President, to move from discussion to negotiation, and from debate to decisions, in the interest not just of the Security Council but of the reform of the Organization more generally.

Mr. Cassar (Malta): The maintenance of international peace and security remains the major task of this Organization. Changes in the international milieu, now inspired by a wider cooperation, have enabled and facilitated the discussion on the future character of the Security Council.

The Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council has provided, and proved itself to be, a worthy forum for a broad-ranging exchange of opinions with the ultimate aim of attaining a convergence of views on these important topics. Much has been discussed. Some very important aspects have been agreed upon. Other key and essential elements still require further discussion.

I join other speakers in thanking the representatives of Finland and Thailand for the sterling work they did last year.

Commenting on the Open-ended Working Group's achievements in their observations and assessment contained in the annex to the report on the Working Group, the Vice-Chairmen state that in their judgement

> "important progress has been achieved during the past two sessions and the groundwork necessary for the reform of the Security Council has been laid".

However, they also note the importance of recognizing that

> "much remains to be done before a comprehensive agreement can be reached among all Member States".

They advise that:

> "In order to arrive at such an agreement the momentum of the work of the Open-ended Working Group must be maintained." (*A/49/965, annex, p. 16*)

The great number of delegations that have asked to speak during this session is indicative of the will of Member States to retain this momentum. Consensus has already been reached on the basic premise inspiring reform, namely, that the Security Council needs to be more representative in nature and reflect better the membership of the Organization in a changed international system.

The Vice-Chairmen stress in their report that

> "Without serious effort to retain this momentum, the status quo would prevail."

They also acknowledge, however, that

> "several delegations do not wish to set any artificial deadlines for the conclusion of the work of the Open-ended Working Group." (*ibid.*)

The crux of the matter remains that of how best to translate the existing consensus on reform into a comprehensive and long-lasting conclusion emerging from the Open-ended Working Group. Various options have been discussed and proposed by Member States. These range from a number of proposals which offer different computations for an increase in the membership of existing categories to those which involve understandings, which take into account the possibility of having some Member States more frequently but not permanently serving on the Council, as in the case of the proposals tabled by Italy and Mexico. Each merits attention and careful consideration.

Such reflection by the general membership should not be construed or interpreted as being a mere repetition of past work and discussion. Whilst it is true that the next phase of work is the process of actual negotiation, are we sufficiently convinced that there exists enough of a broad-based consensus to take us into this phase? Are we agreed on all the relevant principles as yet?

My delegation's impression is that at present we have not reached that stage. That is especially true of the discussions on the question of the future categories of membership of the Security Council. Deliberations on that question are especially delicate. Proposals on different and new categories remain interesting to my delegation.

The ultimate decision on the future character and composition of the Security Council must seek to reflect the reality of an expanded and enlarged General Assembly. The path that is finally adopted should aim at enhancing, rather than diminishing, the existing possibilities of rotation amongst the broadest possible number of Members. It is for this reason that this delegation views with great concern the proposal to lift the restriction on the immediate re-election of Security Council members.

The question of the increase in Security Council membership should not detract our attention from other equally important issues that relate to its present functioning and to the Council's interaction with the rest of the membership. This Organization has been committed to a process of revitalization of its major organs, including the General Assembly. The General Assembly is the only organ in which all Member States are permanent members.

As recently stated during the Commemorative Meeting for the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations by my Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Guido de Marco,

> "We believe, and have always maintained, that there has to be a revitalization of the role of the General Assembly. ... In the restructuring of the Security Council, a symbiotic relationship between the Council and the General Assembly is of the essence." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 40th meeting, p. 56)*

Only through the building of a more responsive and immediate relationship between the Assembly and the Security Council can we enhance the contribution of the United Nations universal membership to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Much has already been achieved in rendering the work of the Security Council more transparent. Malta welcomes the practices instituted thus far. These are steps in a worthy direction and examples of the will and commitment to transparency. Practices that go in the direction of greater participation facilitate the work of the Council and the Assembly in ensuring the effectiveness of the Organization.

The Working Group's efforts thus far trace one of the multiple paths of reflection being taken by Member States on the future of the Organization. The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations has provided us with an opportunity to renew our commitment to the principles of the Charter. We should indeed take full advantage of the momentum offered by this anniversary and aim for substantial achievements during this session. But such an intent should be encouraging rather than restrictive. It is more of a target and less of a plan. Undue insistence on a rigid time-table can take us off on a tangent and away from that open discussion which has imprinted the work of the Open-ended Working Group thus far.

Our central commitment is to identify a fair and long-lasting reform, a reform that does not detract from the Security Council's present ability and responsibility to perform its duties in accordance with the principles established by the Charter. To that commitment, this delegation pledges its full support.

Mr. Thanarajasingam (Malaysia): At the outset, we wish to acknowledge with appreciation the tireless efforts of the Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group on the reform of the Security Council, Mr. Amara Essy, and his two Vice-Chairmen, the Permanent Representatives of Finland and Thailand. The work within this Group has never been easy, given the

importance and complexity of the issues involved. The Group has yet to find the right recipe, the right balance between the impulses of democracy and power politics, as we remain collectively engaged in promoting international peace, security and development.

The question relating to the Security Council has been the subject of intensive debates in this body as well as outside for years. Since the establishment of the Working Group two years ago, the global momentum to make the Security Council representative and to improve its working and decision-making methods has intensified. After two years of meetings, there is consensus to enlarge the membership, a point reflected in the report of this Group. But enlargement or expansion, however great or small, will not by itself resolve the multifaceted problems confronting the Security Council. The Council must be comprehensively restructured and reformed if it is to discharge its Charter-mandated function.

Commenting on the membership of the Security Council, the Malaysian Prime Minister, in his address in the general debate on 29 September 1995, stated, as on other occasions:

> "permanent seats should be given to regions, possibly determined by a regional mechanism". *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 12th meeting, p. 4)*

Malaysia maintains that permanent seats should be given to regions, and not on the basis of specific countries. Given the increasingly important role of regionalism and subregionalism within the context of globalism, the composition of a global institution should reflect this important development. The interests of the region, not the interests of individual countries, must be the basis, a concept already embraced by one of the largest regional groups within the United Nations.

Fifty years after the birth of this Organization, we must take steps, if not strides, to veer away from practices that entrench power politics. We need to move towards more representative forms that truly seek to reflect the collective interests of all. Only in this context can there be enduring interests, determined — within the dynamics of the area — by regional and subregional partners. The mechanism, however, would have to be worked out in detail by the respective regions. My delegation looks forward to sharing thoughts on this issue as and when the Working Group reconvenes.

As to the size of the increase, there is no monopoly of wisdom or knowledge over the magic figure. At the end of the day, it is essentially a political decision that must take on board the concerns of all of us, especially those that are already disadvantaged, particularly the developing countries. The Council cannot remain nor become the permanent multilateral abode solely of the rich and powerful.

The question of veto is one of the cardinal issues, as it impinges directly on the decision-making process of the Council. Malaysia has consistently spoken out against the veto power. In his address of 29 September 1995, the Malaysian Prime Minister reaffirmed this position, saying:

> "The veto power should be dropped. Under no circumstances must the Security Council be made an instrument of any one country." *(ibid)*

The veto power negates the principle of sovereign equality, and is anachronistic. While its explicit exercise has declined since the end of the cold war, the threat of its use has often been exploited to prevent the Council from fulfilling its Charter mandate. There would seem to be a correlation between its non-use and the increasing number of informal meetings, often involving select Member States, where decisions are often made.

At the same time, it is evident that those with the veto power would not give their assent to its abolition. Notwithstanding this position, the international community must be relentless in this struggle. We fully support the proposal to define Article 27 of the Charter, which in its current state is ambiguous. Article 27 makes a distinction as to voting procedure between procedural and substantive questions, without, however, defining these terms. According to Goodrich and Hambro, the authors of a book, published in 1949,

> "No article of the Charter has in practice aroused greater controversy than Article 27." (*Charter of the United Nations — Commentary and Documents, p. 220*)

Based on General Assembly resolution 267 (III), adopted in 1949, we believe that the time has come for a serious and in-depth examination of the application of Article 27.

In this regard, my delegation endorses the following specific proposals: firstly, to establish general criteria for

the identification of what are to be considered actions of a procedural nature, as stated in Article 27 (2) of the Charter; secondly, to identify the questions of "vital importance", as stated in resolution 267 (III), where the veto could be applied; and, thirdly, to establish a mechanism that would modify the present voting system, including ensuring that a single vote would not be sufficient to prohibit the overwhelming majority within the Council from making a pronouncement or taking a decision.

While recognizing the difficulties, we believe that the application of the veto could be modified by procedures and understandings that could be developed in the course of our next stage of discussions in the Open-ended Working Group. We hope that the permanent members will be forthcoming and not adopt a dogmatic approach if substantive progress in all aspects is to be made.

My delegation fully subscribes to the position of the Non-Aligned Movement, as reflected in its position paper contained in document A/49/965. The paper addresses both issues of expansion and working methods. In response to the universal clamour, including that of the Non-Aligned Movement, to improve its working methods, the Council has introduced some measures. Yet these measures are yet to be institutionalized. We believe that other measures, as suggested by the Non-Aligned Movement, need to be adopted by the Security Council to improve transparency.

One specific area requiring immediate attention pertains to consultations between the Security Council and the troop-contributing countries. Although the presidential statement in the Security Council on 4 November 1994 has facilitated some degree of consultation, the process remains ad hoc. The co-chairmanship of the meetings by the President of the Security Council and the Secretariat has been ineffective. It is time for the implementation of Article 44 of the Charter, which invites the Member State concerned

> "to participate in the decisions of the Security Council concerning the employment of contingents of that Member's armed forces".

We wish to underline our disappointment that non-governmental organizations have been prevented from being involved in this Working Group — ironically, often by some of the very delegations which have advocated their involvement in other Working Groups of the General Assembly. The Working Group can benefit from their inputs, and we hope that during the present chairmanship this issue can be resolved.

The credibility and effectiveness of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security depend on the success of this reform exercise. In supporting the Security Council, we must correct its current weaknesses and imbalances. A reformed and restructured Security Council must reflect the realities of our times.

Mr. Laing (Belize): The delegation of Belize fully subscribes to the statement which will be made shortly by the delegation of Guyana on behalf of the Caribbean Community, but which, unfortunately, could not be made earlier.

Since this most recent phase of the debate on the reform of the Security Council began some two years ago, speakers have often focused on the differences between us, sometimes almost with a sense of despair. However, on perusing the recent report of the Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group seized of this subject, it is remarkable that a substantial measure of agreement has been reached on a number of topics. This consensus has, in no small measure, been due to the diligent efforts of the Vice-Chairmen, under the guidance and inspiration of the President's distinguished predecessors, Mr. Samuel Insanally and Mr. Amara Essy. We can therefore reflect with satisfaction on the large measure of agreement on the issues relating to the question of the working methods of the Council, particularly the formerly sore topic of transparency. I would suggest that these advances have been quite remarkable.

It is patently clear to this delegation that there is agreement that the Council has to be democratized. In fact, this delegation has not once heard any defence of the contrary proposition during the numerous interventions in this Assembly's general debate, during the Assembly's previous debates on this agenda item, during the meetings of the Open-ended Working Group, or during the recent Special Commemorative Meeting. This might appear to be a victory without substance. But, to understand its significance, we must take into consideration the tremendous growth in the Organization's jurisprudence on the principle of democratization. Over recent years, under the impulsion of our collective efforts, the most undemocratic Governments have accepted, without major demur, the obligation to accord the rights and freedoms of democracy to their peoples. There has been a flowering of elections throughout the planet, all under the banner of democracy. In many places, the United Nations has

overseen the transition to democracy, a topic which we now formally debate during this Assembly's sessions, as we did this morning. A people's right to the free exercise of democracy has possibly now become enshrined as a crucial norm of international law. How could it be otherwise? Democracy is an aspect of the extraordinary edifice of human rights and freedoms which we have so diligently constructed since the Atlantic Charter.

Since no State has challenged the vitality of the doctrine of democracy during this thoroughgoing exercise, it appears to this delegation that there exists agreement on a number of matters. Firstly, we believe that there is broad agreement on reform of the veto, the quintessence of anti-popularism. Other evidence for this conclusion is the silence of a number of major Powers which might otherwise have claimed that this was a reserved domain. With the widespread chorus favouring change, we conclude that there is agreement that the veto will be reformed. Reform will probably take either the form of the specification of particular cases in which the right may be exercised or the requirement of the concurrence, in any putative exercise, of a minimum number of States.

If we are incorrect, we would request those who have different views to let their views be heard. If we are correct, we would agree that the full application of this understanding might await agreement on a package on a number of other issues. Of course, this delegation must acknowledge that those States which now possess the veto might be temporarily exempt from such reform.

There have been many rich contributions to the discussion of the structure of the Security Council. Again, broad agreement can be detected. This delegation believes that there is an overall sense that all five regions of this Organization should be equitably and democratically represented in the permanent membership band of the Council. The differences lie in such details as the number of such members, the methods of their selection and their tenure.

However, if on resumption of the deliberations of the Working Group the President of the General Assembly were to identify consensus on this broad principle, further progress might be facilitated. Of course, my delegation maintains that there must be equity, and that all regions deserve equal representation — two members for each region, which would include four of the existing permanent members. Again, we might have to live with the existing permanent members' continuing to serve and exercise their privileges — temporarily, I should hope.

We have heard a number of delegations recommend that certain, named States should be specially designated permanent members. However, my delegation holds the view that the approach of naming States is incompatible with the overarching premise of democracy. Besides, we are all well aware of the phenomenon of the dissolution of States and of the difficult questions of State succession to which this gives rise. In very recent years, this question has had to be addressed in relation even to a permanent member of the Council. It would be folly to take risks now.

On the other hand, it is clear that there is agreement on a number of the factors that undoubtedly inform the recommendation that particular States, including one of the existing permanent members, should be so specially designated. These factors surely include the following: first, willingness to contribute very significantly to peace and security; secondly, the constitutional and physical ability to contribute to peace and security; and, thirdly, possession of the financial means so to contribute, as evidenced by minimum United Nations budgetary assessments.

Let us, then, enact these or similar or other criteria, rather than discuss named States. It might well be that, on the basis of such criteria, two or three States, including an existing permanent member, would qualify for specially designated permanent membership, over and above the 10 regional permanent members that we propose.

One egregiously undemocratic aspect of this entire question is the fact that the vast majority of States have never served on the Security Council. At present there is a tendency for the Council to be serviced by delegations sufficiently large to enable them to participate in its numerous committees — and frequent world travel is involved. It is clear that, without some novel solutions, this trend will continue.

My delegation again suggests that States be given the option — I repeat: the option — of applying to the regular membership of the Council the modality of sharing a seat on a subregional and neighbourhood or adjacency basis, in the same manner as is currently done in the Global Environment Facility and other financial institutions.

Since 1945, when, for the second or third time this century, the unilateral use of force was outlawed, we have been willing participants in a system of

collectives — including regional — security. In such a system, security is a shared endeavour. It could not be otherwise. The basis for sharing a seat is therefore even more sound in the case of the Council than in the case of financial institutions.

Let me be clear: if we were to do nothing but ensure more adequate participation by the vast majority of unrepresented States, while removing aspects of inequity and lack of democracy, much would be accomplished, and my delegation would be reasonably satisfied. Under the President's wise leadership, we have high hopes for a happy and successful conclusion to these deliberations during this momentous fiftieth anniversary year. I wish you good luck.

Mr. Lamamra (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): The statement of the Permanent Representative of Colombia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, was faithful to the deliberations and conclusions of the Movement's eleventh summit conference, which was held in Cartagena last October, and it enjoys my delegation's full support.

That statement referred in particular to the need to democratize the United Nations to reflect the universal nature of the Organization and to implement the principle of the sovereign equality of States. It also emphasized the requirements of representativeness and transparency in the Security Council. Similarly, it reaffirmed the overall proposal submitted to the Working Group by the non-aligned countries and the position of principle that it is essential that there be a substantial increase in the proportion of Council members belonging to the Movement. Finally, the Heads of State or Government of the non-aligned countries very appropriately reiterated the position taken by the Movement at its fifth, sixth and tenth summits on the question of the right of veto, which is that they support a reduction in the field of application of the veto, as a step towards its abolition, and ended by mentioning the General Conference to review the United Nations Charter foreseen in Article 109 of the Charter.

This contribution of the Non-Aligned Movement, which was made after completion of the Working Group's report now before us, is particularly important in that it is sufficient in itself to open up, in a serious and responsible manner, the whole problem of a Security Council reform that would respond genuinely to the expectations of the great majority of States Members of the United Nations and enjoy their full support. From that point of view, the position expressed at Cartagena has a clarifying effect that is especially beneficial for the future activities of the Working Group.

Thanks to the solid and laborious discussions that we have had throughout the past year in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, we are today beginning our debate on this item better informed as to the political obstacles accentuated by methodological failings, that prevent us from making a significant breakthrough.

But, whatever one may think of our discussions on this question at the forty-ninth session, we must recognize that the work of the Working Group has now entered a crucial and qualitatively new phase. This development is both promising and fortunate for the credibility and effectiveness of the Working Group as a framework for democratic debate within the United Nations and as an expression of the General Assembly's exercise of its legislative and political functions.

Thus, my delegation, whose positions on all the aspects of this important question have been set forth clearly and in detail, will focus its thinking on the aspects — particularly the methodological aspects — which we regard as the determining ones as the Working Group prepares to enter into discussions at the beginning of next year. That we hope will be decisive for its future and for the success of our efforts.

The Working Group has unquestionably played a catalytic role in an all-inclusive debate which contributed to the maturation of ideas and the emergence of a motivating force for the distillation of concrete proposals, whose wealth and diversity are demonstrated in the compendium published as a working document. But the rather widespread expression of a sincere desire to make the Security Council more effective, more transparent, more legitimate and more democratic are coming up against the fact that this exercise brings together States which are pursuing contradictory — perhaps even irreconcilable — goals.

In addition, there are the legal and institutional limits imposed by the Charter of the United Nations itself. There are also the problems stemming from the incomplete nature of some proposals. In fact, only the Non-Aligned Movement has presented proposals based on a comprehensive approach. Therefore, there is a need for a new *modus operandi* which would channel efforts to

achieve what is possible because it is acceptable to the largest number — rather than continuing to explore ways which inevitably lead to deadlock.

With regard to such a new *modus operandi*, what is required more than ever is transparency in the conduct of debates, promotion of a comprehensive approach to the question of reforming the Security Council, and a quest for consensus in the drafting and formulation of arrangements agreed upon. I wish to specify, with regard to transparency, that my delegation has repeatedly suggested keeping the public in our countries regularly and objectively informed of the progress of our debates, so that the complexity of this exercise will be very clear and no hasty conclusions will be encouraged or drawn.

To be dynamic, the Working Group must also establish a relationship of total trust between the members of the Bureau and the Member States. The Bureau must feel encouraged to fully play its role of reducing differences in viewpoints, in a spirit of complete impartiality. I am pleased, in this context, to pay tribute to President Amara Essy and to our colleagues from Thailand and Finland for the efforts they have made to that end.

The commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations has prompted a quest to restore the Organization to the peoples in whose name the Charter has set forth values, purposes and principles which we must try to promote more than in the past. The frustrations in public opinion are most often linked to impairments in the functioning of the Security Council. Therefore, our common efforts must move resolutely towards a reform which would justify the position of those who believe that the effectiveness of the Security Council goes hand in hand with democratization and legitimacy.

The major challenge today is to build a new system of international relations which is anchored in the original purity of the values, purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, and which should be protected from the reflexes, practices and references of the cold war. The Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council will do useful work only if all the participants in it are determined to base their undertaking on this historical perspective.

Mr. Sucharipa (Austria): The challenge for the Security Council today, after the emergence of a new, cooperative spirit in international relations, is to become fully adjusted to the function the founding fathers of the United Nations expected it to fulfil: to bear the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. This is also a challenge for all of us while we again discuss Security Council reform. Increased activities and a broadened spectrum of position-taking and decision-making on behalf of the whole membership underline the importance of the overall legitimacy of the Security Council as the highest political body on the international scene.

In the view of a large majority of Member States, the current structure of the Council does not, however, take into account international changes which have occurred during the last decades, due, *inter alia*, to the process of decolonization and to political and economic developments and realignments. In their opinion, the Security Council, bearing the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, does not adequately reflect the universality of its mandators, that is, the general membership of the Organization. Austria shares this preoccupation.

The Security Council's authority must be strong enough to generate the political will of the broad range of the whole membership of the Organization to carry out its decisions.

The task of maintaining and strengthening this legitimacy of the Security Council, and guaranteeing it by a high degree of representativity and by adequate transparency, constitutes the essential challenge for the Security Council in the future. And we, the Member States represented in the General Assembly, must build the necessary foundations. We must agree on necessary structural changes to enable the Security Council to live up to this challenge.

In this year of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, we must combine our efforts to ensure that this Organization is well-equipped for the next half century. A reformed Security Council which can rely on universal support will be of vital importance in the decades to come.

Since our debate last year, the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council, which was established by the forty-eighth General Assembly, has had a dynamic and rich discussion on all issues pertaining to its mandate. In this context, I would like to pay a special tribute to Ambassadors Wilhelm

Breitenstein from Finland and Nitya Pibulsonggram from Thailand for the untiring efforts they have undertaken in their capacity as Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group. My delegation, like many others, is most grateful for the excellent compendium of observations and assessment they have jointly prepared in document A/49/965, which provides a most detailed insight into the progress made during the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

During this year's general debate and, most recently, on the occasion of the Special Commemorative Meeting on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, a significant number of heads of delegation again underlined the urgent need for substantive progress in our work, which should finally culminate in the taking of a political decision on an appropriate reform of the Council. We should take advantage of this high level of interest in the subject and the present dynamism. Aiming first at a more focused debate, we should enter as soon as possible the process of negotiations.

The Austrian delegation, together with a number of other countries, elaborated a discussion paper that was submitted to the Working Group during the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. Our aim in preparing that paper was to make a constructive contribution to the debate and to highlight possible compromise solutions. The focal points of the Austrian position, reached after in-depth consideration of the numerous other proposals and suggestions presented during the Working Group's deliberations, which are also contained in that document, can be summarized as follows.

First, in our view, the main objective of the reform must be to guarantee a high degree of representativity in the Council and the efficiency and effectiveness of its work. With this in mind, its future enlargement — which, in any case, should not exceed a total of 25 members — has to take full account of the reality and pluralism of today's world and satisfy the need for equitable geographic representation.

Secondly, during the last 50 years the concept of having both permanent and non-permanent members has proved its merits. The necessary continuity of the Council's work and the appropriate reflection of the international power structure were combined with democratic elements, thus ensuring a certain degree of representativity and providing fresh ideas for the solution of upcoming problems. In our view, on the basis of this experience, any future enlargement should take place within the existing categories by preserving as much as possible the present configuration of balance between permanent and non-permanent seats.

Thirdly, the general criteria for the choice of new permanent members must be political and economic realities, the global influence of the potential candidates and their capacity and willingness to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security, including through contributions to peace-keeping operations. The principle of equitable geographic representation has to apply.

Fourthly, for the election of non-permanent members — based, again, on the principle of geographic representation — the current criteria listed in Article 23, paragraph 1, of the Charter should be maintained.

Fifthly, as the deliberations within the Working Group clearly demonstrated, one of the main concerns of delegations is the future voting procedure in the Council, in particular the question of the veto. Austria, along with a significant number of other countries, is of the view that the veto should and could be limited in its scope and use.

The legitimacy of the Security Council not only calls for a higher degree of formalized representativity, but also for increased interaction between the members and non-members of the Council. In our view, it is of the greatest importance that the universal membership be able to understand how political situations are dealt with by the Council. An adequate flow of information towards non-members is extremely helpful in this context and should therefore be continuously facilitated. Certainly, in order to ensure constructive discussions and negotiations, deliberations in closed meetings will remain necessary.

However, a certain balance between privacy and transparency has to be established in order to pave the way for possible feedback on the work of the Council from the international community, as represented in the General Assembly. Delegations with a special interest in particular political situations dealt with in the Security Council should, at an early stage of the decision-making process, have the opportunity to offer their views and provide input. This applies in particular to countries which are politically concerned by a given conflict or which will be economically affected by a future or present sanctions regime, because of, for example, their geographic proximity.

A better exchange of views and information will help increase the confidence of non-members in the Council's work, its credibility and its political authority.

In this context, my delegation wholeheartedly welcomes the significant improvements made by the Council in the last year or so towards better access to information, and we ask all its present and future members to assure an appropriate and consistent follow-up to these initial steps.

Since the discussions on the enlargement of the Security Council meet with well-known difficulties, we are of the opinion that in order to enhance legitimacy of the Council, the immediate need is for greater attention to be given to the cluster II, as contained in the compendium, with a view to strengthening the transparency and the working methods of the Council.

With its long-standing tradition in the area of United Nations peace-keeping, Austria attaches the greatest importance to a prompt and continued flow of information in this context. My delegation would therefore like to emphasize the progress that has already been achieved in this area.

The recent improvements are a result of the proposals and debates held in the framework of the General Assembly's Working Group. We await with great interest its forthcoming meetings, which will, hopefully, provide more ideas on how the working methods of a reformed Council can be further improved. Although some delegations might not wish to set so-called artificial deadlines, let me reiterate that we fully share the Vice-Chairmen's views, expressed in their compendium, that Member States should take full advantage of the momentum offered by the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations and aim for a substantial achievement in the debate on the reform of the Council during this session.

For this to happen, I submit that we will all have to put narrow national interests back into our files and try to focus on the main goals, which I am sure we all share: how best, in the interest of the international community as a whole, to restructure the Security Council in order to enhance its representativity and legitimacy and at the same time maintain the effectiveness and efficiency of its action.

Mr. Ladsous (France) (*interpretation from French*): We are beginning a third year of discussion on the expansion of the Security Council. After the long months needed to get negotiations under way, positions have recently been stated. The time has come to enter a negotiating phase that would make it possible for us to advance towards the conclusion of this undertaking.

What is most important at this stage is the clarity with which positions are presented. The approach advocated by France is well known and unambiguous and has been stated by the President and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the French Republic on many occasions.

France favours an increase in the number of members of the Security Council in the two existing categories, and without any changes in their attributions. In our view, this should be accomplished through the inclusion of new partners as permanent members. Germany and Japan seem to us to be fully qualified to join that category, as are some States of the South whose role on the international political scene deserves to be recognized and taken into account. Some new non-permanent seats could also be established in order to improve the geographical representativity of the Council, but this should be done in moderation so as not to cast doubt upon the Council's ability to act effectively and quickly.

Allow me to recall briefly the reasons why this option is in our view the one that would contribute most effectively to strengthening the Security Council while preserving the major checks and balances which have marked the establishment, the life and the success of the Organization for 50 years.

The San Francisco Charter — and the fiftieth anniversary Declaration — has just reminded us that it gives

> "... expression to the common values and aspirations of humankind" *(resolution 50/6, para. 2)* —

conferred on a group of States the permanent seats in the organ with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Some feel that this orientation is a part of past history whose time is over and that since they cannot put an end to the privileges of the permanent members, strengthening or expanding this category of members should be avoided. Those who hold that view thus reject the very principles underlying the Charter. And it goes without saying that France does not share this line of thinking.

On the contrary, it is our opinion that the concept which inspired the Charter has rendered inestimable service to mankind and that it is important, for the future, to strengthen it while adapting it to the new characteristics of the international situation. The number of Member States has of course increased considerably, and that is why it is desirable that this greater diversity in international political life be reflected in a larger number of Council members. Moreover, the number of States that are playing a leading role in the world has also increased and their permanent presence in the Security Council is therefore justified. Hence, we are firmly convinced that the action of the Security Council, and consequently of the United Nations, would be strengthened by recognizing the role played today — side by side with China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States — by countries such as Germany and Japan as well as by other great countries belonging to the developing world. This recognition would enable those States to contribute fully to international peace and security. It would therefore contribute to the achievement of the purposes of the Charter.

I should also like to take this opportunity to recall that the Charter designates the permanent members to exercise global responsibilities on behalf of all the Members of the Organization. There is no question of their drawing their legitimacy from any regional mandate whatever. For that reason, in particular, the idea of "regional permanent seats" seems to us to lend itself to controversy. Indeed, we do not think that the idea of semi-permanent members was broadly supported within the Working Group. Moreover, we have reservations as to the idea that the choice of Council members should be removed from the General Assembly and left to the discretion of regional groups. In fact, this idea is not in keeping with the rule that States must be accountable to the entire Assembly for the way in which they carry out their responsibilities.

We must think this matter through and determine which States would benefit from an expansion of the Council. We hope that the conclusion of this process of reflection will be that, without delay, we shall set ourselves the goal of rallying the largest number of delegations possible around a viable formula prior to the start of the next session of the General Assembly.

We know that the President intends to devote all his efforts to this project. We wish him to know that he has our full support and our complete confidence. I take this opportunity also to express to the members of the Bureau of the Working Group, who have enabled us to make such substantial progress in our work, the very sincere gratitude of the French delegation. This gratitude is extended in the first place to Ambassador Breitenstein of Finland, who has been involved in this exercise from the very start, with praiseworthy devotion and impartiality on all points. Our gratitude goes also to Ambassador Chew Tai Soo of Singapore and then to his successor, Ambassador Pibulsonggram of Thailand, who are as worthy of praise as their Co-Chairmen.

I conclude by confirming that the French delegation does not claim any exclusivity in regard to the method to be used and that it is prepared to participate in complete good faith and in a constructive spirit in the negotiations which we are duty-bound to carry out successfully.

Mr. Çelem (Turkey): As my Foreign Minister stated in the general debate earlier in the session, the fiftieth anniversary is the most opportune time to engage in self-criticism, to revisit the Charter of the United Nations, to get back to basics, to adapt the United Nations to the new political environment and to make it the real centre of collective security and global solidarity. In this context, and as my delegation has reiterated on numerous occasions, the focus of attention should be the Security Council, which carries the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The central issue before us is the enhancement of the representative character of the Security Council. The new international political environment requires the democratization of the Council. When, on 28 June 1993, we first presented our views on the reform of the Security Council, we referred to the following call by the Secretary-General that we recognize that:

> "the time has come to fulfil the logic of the Charter and pursue not only democratization within States, but democratization throughout the international system ... it also means applying the principles of democratization within the United Nations itself, a goal to which I am committed". *(A/48/264, p. 89)*

We strongly endorse this call. Very recently, after almost three years, the Secretary-General felt the need to re-emphasize it.

The widespread demands that the Security Council be made more representative, democratic, responsive, transparent and accountable should be met. We are strongly in favour of genuine and comprehensive reform. It is with these thoughts in mind that my delegation has

actively participated in the first two years of deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council.

Having taken note of the report of the Open-ended Working Group contained in document A/49/47 and the compendium contained in document A/49/965, we believe that the next stage of deliberations should be held on the basis of concrete proposals. There are now many useful ideas and proposals before us which necessitate further reflection. But I must underline, once again, that we are against any unnecessary acceleration of the reform process.

There are two main aspects of our work which require equal attention: we have to enhance the representative weight of the Council and to democratize its method of work.

Let me dwell on the first point. The enhancement of the representativity of the Council cannot be confined to a mere numerical expansion of its size. The modalities of the enlargement should also be elaborated. We do not believe that an increase in the overall number of seats will alone suffice to ensure more equitable and representative participation in the work of the Council. The enlargement should be coupled with a fair system of workable rotation. In this context, we firmly believe that the proposal submitted by Italy to the Open-ended Working Group merits careful consideration.

In our position paper of 15 September 1995, contained in document A/49/965, we indicated that the prospective size of the Council should be determined on the basis of the concepts of representativity, democracy, legitimacy, efficiency and effectiveness. We believe that the idea of correlating the size of the Council to its efficiency is inherently misleading.

The underlying determinant of the efficiency of the Council is the support of Member States. The Council could become more effective if it were perceived by the international community as being more equitably representative of the general membership, and thus more authoritative in its decisions. The present dichotomy — a Council that is relatively more efficient in its deliberations, yet less effective in the implementation of its decisions — calls for thorough consideration.

Therefore, in accordance with the view of the majority of Member States, only a Security Council with at least 25 members would be sufficiently representative, as well as more effective and efficient. It should be enlarged by an additional 10 non-permanent members. Thus, the existing ratio of one permanent member to two non-permanent members would be reorganized as one to four. These new, additional seats should be rotated between countries on a predetermined list, the number of which could be fixed between 30 and 40. The countries to be included in the list could be selected according to a set of objective criteria.

The criteria and the list should be flexible so that they could be updated after a certain period of time, that is, there should be a mechanism that would ensure that political and economic changes on the international scene would be regularly reflected in the composition of the Council. The review of the list could be carried out every 12 or 16 years.

This proposal also calls for a new assessment of the concept of constituencies in the distribution of seats in the Council. As stated in our first written proposal, of 28 June 1993, present arrangements for the geographical distribution of the non-permanent seats in the Council, adopted in 1963, are outdated. With the enlargement of the membership, and taking into account the recent changes in the international political landscape, a new approach in this regard, based on the replacement of the current large geographical groups by narrower constituencies, is worth considering. Designation of separate and smaller constituencies would further enhance the representative character of the Council. It would also ensure more equitable and balanced geographical distribution.

The reform of the working methods of the Council constitutes the second dimension of our work. Here, I do not wish to go into detail on this point again. We have explained our views in the Working Group, and we will continue to elaborate on them. However, I would like to emphasize the issue of sanctions. United Nations-imposed sanctions constitute an effective measure for determined action against violators of international law. Nevertheless, there are serious shortcomings which need to be addressed. In this context, we fully endorse the Secretary-General's views on sanctions, particularly his reference to Article 50 of the Charter. He rightly states in his "Supplement to An Agenda for Peace":

> "Sanctions are a measure taken collectively by the United Nations to maintain or restore international peace and security. The costs involved in their application, like other such costs ..., should

> be borne equitably by all Member States and not exclusively by the few who have the misfortune to be neighbours or major economic partners of the target country." (*A/50/60, para. 73*)

In addition to the content of this important observation, the lack of efficient consultation mechanisms and the secrecy of the Council's decision-making process regarding the imposition and review of sanctions are also of concern to the general membership. We are convinced that transparency in the activities of the Council with respect to sanctions will ensure wider support for their implementation.

Our aim should be to make the Open-ended Working Group a genuine driving force for real reform. We have to create a Security Council that is more effective, representative, democratic, transparent, accountable, credible and authoritative. It is a historic task which we must fulfil.

Mr. Butler (Australia): In the solemn Declaration (resolution 50/6) adopted on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, we all stated that we

> "Are determined that the United Nations of the future will work with renewed vigour and effectiveness in promoting peace, development, equality and justice and understanding among the peoples of the world"

and that we

> "Will give to the twenty-first century a United Nations equipped, financed and structured to serve effectively the peoples in whose name it was established." (*ibid.*)

These are fundamental commitments. They were made in the name of the peoples we represent. They were designed to be of benefit to them.

In addition to enshrining these fundamental commitments, the Declaration addressed specifically the question of change in the Security Council, but it did so in a definite context. No understanding of what was stated specifically would be complete without taking that context into account.

The question of the Security Council of the future was addressed in overarching language which stated:

> "In order to be able to respond effectively to the challenges of the future and the expectations of the United Nations held by peoples around the world, it is essential that the United Nations itself be reformed and modernized." (*Ibid., para. 14*)

I wish to note that these are the terms in which Australia is approaching the questions of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. We do not expect, nor do we seek, direct national benefit from this process. We fervently desire the collective, shared benefits of a modernized Council. We have taken part in the process and vigorously pursued a broadly acceptable outcome because we are convinced that it is a necessary condition for the United Nations to be able to do the job expected of it by the peoples in whose name it was established.

In its specifics, the fiftieth anniversary Declaration records two main sets of perceptions about the Security Council of the future: first, the Security Council should, *inter alia*, be expanded and its working methods continued to be reviewed in a way that will further strengthen its capacity and effectiveness, enhance its representative character and improve its working efficiency and transparency; and, secondly, as important differences on key issues continue to exist, further in-depth consideration of these issues is required.

The report of the Open-ended Working Group which we are considering today is testimony to the application and effort that all have made towards advancing our work on this important subject.

The Co-Chairmen deserve our gratitude for their sensitive work and for their integrity, which is all the more remarkable when the uncommon pressures to which they were, and are now being, subjected are considered.

Any judgement of the efforts to date implies the exercise of a basic choice. Simply, we can decide to underline progress or to highlight difficulties. Australia prefers the former.

In our view, considerable progress has been made over the past year. The report, including the compendium, reflects the dynamism of the discussions; the wealth of ideas and proposals; and the areas on which there is a broad measure of agreement and those on which differences continue to exist. In addition, the report reflects important political commitments. These are: the commitment to continue the search for an

outcome that is acceptable to all, and the widespread determination that we should aim to achieve a result as soon as possible.

As we move ahead, we must not lose sight of why this work is important. Reform of the Security Council — the creation of a modern and more effective Security Council — will play an integral role in the process of revitalizing the United Nations.

The Open-ended Working Group must, therefore, continue its mandate. It is the forum in which we can continue to pursue a productive discussion on the range of issues we have to address. This process has been greatly facilitated by the informal consultations that have been held by the Co-Chairmen, and it could well be expanded. Whatever the outcome of such processes, their results must be returned to the General Assembly, and that means first to its Working Group. We strongly recommend that this overall approach be maintained. It has many virtues and, not least, it is relatively resistant to populist oversimplification of what is at stake in, and how we can secure change in, the Security Council.

In considering the Working Group's report, looking to the future and consistent with the approach of emphasizing progress rather than difficulties, there appear to be three issues on which there is a broad measure of agreement. These are, first, that the Security Council must be enlarged; secondly, that two principles should govern that enlargement — that it be made more representative of the overall membership of the United Nations, and that it not be enlarged to a number of members that would reduce its working efficiency, simply because of the size to which it had grown; and, thirdly, that in the forthcoming expansion of the Council the present five permanent members will remain permanent members. Australia agrees to the approaches represented by these three points.

Furthermore, there appear to be a number of issues on which there is a considerable measure of convergence of views, but on which there is perhaps not quite the same measure of agreement as on the three points I have just listed. These measures are: first, expansion of the membership should be balanced in two specific ways. It should be in both the present categories of membership — permanent and non-permanent — and it should create a Council in which there is balanced representation between developed and developing countries, reflecting fully equitable geographical distribution. Secondly, agreement on the expansion of the Council must be decided upon as a whole package, addressing all the issues of an increase in membership, size and balance as a whole.

Australia is broadly in agreement with the two points I have just enumerated, and, for our part, we are firmly of the view, deriving from those points, that Japan and Germany should be accorded permanent seats. But we also recognize the force of the argument that to provide a modern balance in the permanent membership of the Council a small number of developing country Member States from other regions should also be accorded such membership.

If we look ahead on the basis of those three, or five, points, then a fairly clear perspective can be obtained on the issues on which we need to continue to focus more sharply in the future. These are: the method of selection of members of the Council in order to ensure that the criteria of representation of the overall membership and effectiveness of the Council are met; in this context, the question of what kind of amendment of the Charter would be required to bring about a new Council; and, finally, the question of what might best be done, within existing or new categories of membership, to bring about the desired result.

In addition, there is another important issue: methods of decision-making within a new Council. A key question in that context is that of the veto, on which Australia's views have been stated fully in the Working Group.

In conclusion, there should be no doubt that these related issues — the number of permanent members, their representative character and identities, and the use to which their powers are put, including the veto — are keys to agreement on a revised, modern Security Council, as is the fundamental need to produce a Council more representative of the membership of the United Nations as a whole, but of a size that remains efficient.

The debate on this subject has, as the report reflects, been long and detailed, and it is familiar to all of us. Australia's view is that action is required. There is no lack of ideas. What we must now do is seek political consensus on a new Security Council, a Council that will be effective, will represent the whole membership of the United Nations, and will sensibly reflect the realities of today and those visible in the future.

Mr. Kimberg (Denmark): I am speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries — that is, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Denmark.

The question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council remains high on the agenda for reform of the United Nations. The Nordic countries find that the Open-ended Working Group has done very useful work during the past year. We welcome the report presented to the General Assembly, as well as the Vice-Chairmen's observations on and assessment of the progress of the work of the Open-ended Working Group, included in document A/49/965.

The Nordic countries have contributed actively to the debate on this question. I refer, in particular, to the position paper submitted to the Working Group by the Nordic countries in June this year, which is included in the document I have just referred to. I would like to take this opportunity to highlight some of the elements of that paper and to elaborate further on a few of them.

The fundamental objective of an enlargement of the Security Council should be to strengthen its capacity to discharge the duties assigned to it by the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security. To achieve this objective, the composition of the Council must better reflect the realities of today's world. Special importance should be attached to the principle of equitable geographical representation.

At the same time, the Council's decision-making efficiency must be retained and its ability to implement its decisions enhanced. In particular, it is important that the veto not weaken the Security Council's ability to play the role assigned to it by the Charter. The question of additional vetoes should therefore be considered in the broader context of decision-making in the Council. The Nordic countries believe that the total size of the Security Council should be in the low twenties, preferably 23. Five new seats could be allocated as permanent seats for qualified States. The aim should be to better reflect present political and economic realities, including better representation for Africa, Latin America and Asia in the Council.

In order to ensure equitable geographical representation, it is also essential to increase the number of non-permanent members. Regional groups should be encouraged to establish equitable systems of rotation for non-permanent members. Such arrangements should remain within the competence of the regional groups themselves. We would also like to emphasize that in the interest of the vast majority of Member States, the ban on the immediate re-election of non-permanent members of the Council should be maintained. We further believe that the question of the composition of the Security Council should be re-examined a suitable period of time after the entry into force of changes resulting from our present consideration.

As to the working methods of the Security Council, the Nordic countries welcome the measures already taken and the practices adopted by the Council to enhance its working methods and make its work more transparent. We think that further steps should be taken to involve the Member States more closely in the work of the Council and that consideration should also be given to formalizing steps already taken. It is particularly important that institutionalized consultations between the Security Council and troop-contributing countries take place when mandates for peace-keeping operations are extended or modified and, whenever possible, with potential troop-contributing countries before a decision is taken by the Council to launch a new operation. With regard to the future work of the Open-ended Working Group, the Nordic countries support the suggestions contained in paragraphs 31 to 33 of the Vice-Chairmen's observations and assessment.

The future Bureau, together with the Secretariat, should analyse the views expressed in the general debate, in the Special Commemorative Meeting and in the debate under this agenda item and submit that analysis to the Working Group. The Bureau should present as soon as possible a programme for the future work of the Working Group and prepare new texts for the Working Group's consideration.

We, the Nordic countries, believe that the time has come to move to the next phase of our work, to enter into a process of actual negotiations. The Working Group should attempt to make substantial progress during the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. The Nordic countries share the objective, expressed by the two Vice-Chairmen, of crystallizing different ideas and narrowing down differences. Through this approach, a single negotiating text could emerge from the Working Group's discussions, consultations and negotiations.

Successful reform must, in the end, be a result of political will. Nevertheless, adequate resources provided by the Secretariat are a necessary requirement for bringing our work together. Let me assure the Assembly

that the Nordic countries remain dedicated to the further work of the Working Group.

Mr. Muthaura (Kenya): The question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council is a subject that has engaged the attention of Member States for quite some time now. The interest and active debate that it has generated are proof of Member States' interest and the importance they attach to it. There is general agreement that the Security Council should be reformed to enhance its effectiveness, transparency and accountability and the legitimacy of its decisions.

The report of the Open-ended Working Group on the reform of the Security Council has highlighted the areas requiring reform.

There is general consensus on the need to expand the membership of the Council. Kenya is of the view that expansion of the membership on the basis of the principle of equitable geographical distribution and democratization of the Council would be the surest way of meeting expectations. Regions which are currently unrepresented or underrepresented in the permanent-seat category should be favoured in the allocation of new seats in both categories in order to correct the existing imbalance. At the same time, periodic reviews of the permanent membership would be necessary so as to take into account the evolving realities of the world situation.

We appreciate the circumstances that gave rise to the creation of the permanent and non-permanent seats in the Security Council 50 years ago. However, as we have stated in this Assembly in the past, because of the significant and far-reaching changes that have taken place in the arena of international relations, the criteria for selection in both categories of membership need to be re-examined critically to take into account the new realities.

My delegation has previously expressed the view that the Security Council should be expanded to at least 25 members. We still subscribe to this view, as we feel that it is possible to distribute the seats in a fairer way with this number of members and to correct the imbalance that has characterized the Council's membership to date. We are of the view that the current two-year term of office for the non-permanent members of the Security Council has worked well and should therefore be continued. This system, while affording an opportunity for Member States to have a role in discharging the responsibilities that go with membership, also ensures that as many States as possible are given the opportunity to present their candidature for election. The procedure for the nomination of permanent and non-permanent members should be reserved for regional groups, with elections carried out by the Assembly, as has been the practice for the non-permanent seats. At the same time, we are of the view that the length of permanent membership needs to be pegged to a specific term in such a way that periodic reviews are carried out at the end of that fixed term, with the possibility of new permanent members being elected to replace the old ones.

The Charter bestows upon the Security Council, one of the major organs of the United Nations, the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security on behalf of the general membership. This responsibility should be exercised effectively and impartially by the Council on behalf of the general membership, irrespective of whether the threat to peace is directed towards a small or a big State, and whatever the geographical region. In this respect, the Council's decision-making process is of paramount importance. This calls for greater transparency and accountability in the Council's working methods.

We appreciate the measures taken so far by the Security Council with regard to informal consultations with troop-contributing countries in respect of peace-keeping matters. In this regard, it should be recognized that some of the decisions taken to deal with threats to international security in a particular country in any region have far-reaching regional dimensions, which more often than not adversely affect countries neighbouring the one at the centre of the conflict.

In this connection, it is my delegation's view that interested countries should be given ample opportunity for informal and formal consultations with the Security Council to assist the Council in its decision-making process. Almost invariably, the neighbouring countries bear a heavy burden as a result of fall-out of various types from the country of conflict. It is therefore necessary for the Council and the countries thus affected to have consultations with a view to finding effective ways and means of dealing with the situation.

With regard to the veto power, my delegation is of the view that the veto is a negative instrument, which cannot play a useful role in the changed circumstances, characterized by consultation and consensus. It is anachronistic and undemocratic. It is a legacy of the cold war and has now been rendered obsolete.

We should seize the opportunity offered by the fiftieth anniversary to revitalize the Organization and enhance its effectiveness so that it may serve us better in the next millennium. It is my delegation's view that the Security Council has, by and large, proved to be effective in the maintenance of international peace and security. We must not lose the opportunity to revitalize it, make it more democratic, improve its credibility and ensure that it reflects the universality of the Organization.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): It is 6.02 p.m. We have thus heard the last speaker in the debate for today. The remaining speakers will be heard tomorrow. The morning meeting will begin at 10 o'clock.

In this regard I appeal, on behalf of the President of the General Assembly, who will be in the Chair tomorrow, for promptness. Secondly, I appeal to delegations to observe the 10-minute limit on speeches.

Programme of work

Mr. Pibulsonggram (Thailand), Vice-President, in the Chair.

The Acting President: I should like to inform members that agenda item 38, entitled "The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti", will be taken up on Tuesday, 21 November, in the morning as the second item.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.